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Mother Francis Raphael, O.S.D.
(Augusta Theodosia Drane)

A Memoir of Mother Francis Raphael, O.S.D.

(AUGUSTA THEODOSIA DRANE)

SOMETIME

Prioress Provincial of the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of S. Catherine of Siena, Stone

WITH SOME OF

HER SPIRITUAL NOTES AND LETTERS

EDITED BY

REV. FATHER BERTRAND WILBERFORCE

O.P.

WITH PORTRAIT

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PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION

THAT the influence of Mother Francis Raphael continues to be felt both within and without her own Order is proved by the demand for a new edition of her "Memoir." To this fresh issue have been added some hitherto unpublished meditations which it is hoped will increase the value of the book.

ST. DOMINIC'S CONVENT,
STONE.
Jan. 25, 1923.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE kind reception and rapid sale of the first edition of the Memoir of Mother Francis Raphael Drane, has encouraged her religious daughters of St. Dominic's Convent, Stone, to publish a second edition.

They desire to thank their many kind friends who have shown so high an appreciation of the book, and greatly aided its circulation.

In this edition there are few changes, but some more of Mother Francis Raphael's private writings and letters have been added.

B. W.

ST. THOMAS' PRIORY,
HAWKESYARD, RUGELEY,
Oct. 10, 1897.

PREFACE

In the following Memoir I have done my utmost to make Mother Francis Raphael speak for herself, instead of talking about her in my own words. I am sure my readers will thank me for this, for what she has written reveals her character far more truly than any words of description could do.

But it is necessary to explain how this has become possible, for I owe it in justice to her to say that there is nothing she would have detested more cordially than any appearance of autobiography. It was a form of literature she did not like, and any idea of writing one would have been utterly repugnant to her mind.

How, then, has it been possible to make her speak so much of herself, and to reveal, for our delight and instruction, so much of her inner life and character?

In 1876, an intimate friend[1] of many years' standing was seriously ill. Mother Francis Raphael was tenderly anxious to assist her friend to bear the weary hours of sickness, and the patient declared that no tonic that she could imagine would be so efficacious as some memories of her Superior's childhood and early history. Mother Francis Raphael most kindly wrote off, in her rapid way, an account of her life up to the time that she became a religious, in a private note-book, putting as a title-page: "Memories, for the sole benefit of a sick friend, 1876."

No one, except the one friend for whom these Memories were written, ever saw a page of this book, or even knew it existed, till after Mother Francis Raphael's death; and it was with considerable difficulty that I could overcome her natural reluctance to allow me to employ it for this Memoir. It is quite certain that, if the possibility of the publication of any part of it had presented itself to the mind of Mother Francis Raphael the whole would have been committed to the flames before her death.

---

[1] Sister Mary Gabriel Du Boulay.

But now that she has finished her course and gone to her rest, I am convinced that she will not object to any use of these notes that might help other souls in the battle of life. They give a history of her soul, and through what tribulations it was led, by the hand of God, first into the Fold of the Church, and then to gradual union with Himself. The history of any soul, known at all intimately, would be deeply interesting; still more when it is a soul so highly gifted in mental power.

The Meditations, or, as she called them, expansions of Scripture texts, were discovered, after her death, in a private book; and many of them were probably written in preparation for chapter instructions to her Community, when she was Superior, some for her own meditations. The letters speak for themselves.

Many who are acquainted with her books will be glad to become more personally intimate with the writer herself.

B. W.

St. Dominic's Priory,
London, *April*, 1895.

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PART I

I

MEMOIR

> "Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas præter amare Deum
> Vere magnus est, qui magnam habet charitatem."
>
> *De Imitatione Christi*, Lib. I. cap. 1–4.

> "He gives, in answer to Thy call,
> Too poor a gift who gives not all."
>
> *Songs in the Night.*

ONLY three days before her death, which happened on April 29, 1894, Mother Francis Raphael wrote the following words in a confidential letter to a friend :—

"Write, read, and study—do what you will, there is only one real thing to do in this world, and that is, to love ; all else must be centred in this, and flow from it, or it will be like a tinkling cymbal. Six months of pain have taught me that, in a way I hardly realised before. It will be our life in heaven, and we must begin it here on earth, without excluding the active life, which loves by working for Him we love."

The lesson taught her by her life is thus expressed in golden words just before her death. Love as the centre from which all must flow, love for God only and for all others for His sake, was the only thing valuable in her eyes at the end. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, except to love God. He is truly great who has great love."

This short sketch of her life is to show how she learnt this lesson, and arrived at this conclusion.

I. CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE

Augusta Theodosia Drane, called afterwards Mother Francis Raphael, was born at Bromley, near Bow, in the east of London, on December 28, 1823.

The home in which she was born was an old brick house, which stood, surrounded by gardens and fields, on a site now cut up by the Great Eastern Railway, and covered by a mass of buildings. At that time, and up to fifty years ago, Bromley was separated from London by a considerable expanse of open country. It had a good many of those old-fashioned brick houses, with their walled gardens; occupied, before the days of railroads, by mercantile men, like Mr. Drane, who now contrive to live at a greater distance from town. Miss Drane, in the "Memories" from which we quote, thus describes her old home:—

"Our garden was divided from the river Lea by a field. It was really a beautiful enclosure, and included a shrubbery with some magnificent trees, and three lawns, where the scythes were always at work, making pleasant music in the early mornings. My mother was passionately fond of flowers, and my father, who loved to gratify all her tastes, spared nothing to make the garden perfect of its kind. His own tastes, which were all for country life, led him also to plant and ornament our little paradise. To this hour, the sight of lilacs and laburnums, the smell of syringa and the sound of the mower whetting his scythe, conjures up the picture of this dear old garden, and all associated with it.[1]

"When at Bromley, except when we went to church or drove to town, we never, as children, set foot outside the garden walls. From the shrubbery, however, we beheld the fields, and the river flowing through willow-trees, and enlivened by barges with red sails, which formed another of my childhood's pictures. Not a house was to be seen on the other side of the river. The fields stretched on to the Thames, and we could see on our boundary-line of horizon a slight eminence, which marked the whereabouts of Woolwich. Thence came pretty often the booming of cannon, when they were testing the artillery ; I always believed that these artillery sounds betokened actual war, and they excited in me an intense interest.

---

[1] The memory of this garden has inspired certain verses in the poem called "An April Day," in "Songs in the Night."

" Our family life was a very happy one. My father and mother married young. He was the managing partner in an East India mercantile house. His mother died when he was young, and he became all in all to his father, a venerable old man, who survived till 1831, and whom we all regarded with extraordinary respect, as did all his friends. He lived at Bexhill, near Hastings, where we always spent part of every year. His silver hair and beautiful countenance, his pigtail and rather precise costume of black, form another picture of my early days. When he was with us, he was always treated with a certain amount of ceremony, and gave us his blessing when we wished him goodnight, in the words, ' God Almighty bless you,' which still sound in my ears. His death was a calamity in the family ; his was the first dead countenance I ever beheld, and its majestic beauty struck awe, but not terror into my heart.

" My father, before his marriage, which took place when he was only twenty-two, had already begun to be a book collector and someting of an artist and musician. These tastes he continued to cultivate all through his life. His library grew to be of a considerable size, and its contents determined the direction of my education His musical instruments were of all kinds : organ, piano, harp, flute, and French horn ; but his knowledge of music was not scientific. Far more decided was his talent for landscape painting, his intense love and appreciation for natural scenery. My mother was the most beautiful being I ever beheld, the kind of face that an artist might select as a model for a Madonna. A perfectly oval countenance, a complexion that was faultless, a forehead so open and serene, it looked as though a cloud on it was an impossibility; dark hair and the sweetest violet eyes—such kind eyes; it was the brow and eyes that made the beauty.

"My father was devoted to her with the most chivalrous devotion. At that time he possessed considerable wealth and his happiness consisted in gratifying his wife's desires with a lavishness which would have spoilt any disposition less simple and unselfish than hers. She also had tastes and pursuits of her own. Her father, John Harding, whom I do not remember, was a man of cultivated mind She was fond of reading and of natural history, and the East India captains, who had to do with my father in business, used to pay their court to him by generally bringing home with them presents of curiosities for his wife. In time our home became quite a museum. My mother's collection of shells was unique, containing the rarest varieties. She also had a cabinet of wonderfully beautiful corals and minerals; and her delicate fingers, which had peculiar skill in every sort of handiwork, kept all these collections in exquisite order. Though an almost constant invalid, she was always cheerful, always employed."

The family consisted of one son and three daughters, of whom Augusta was the youngest, three years and a half junior to her next older sister. The effect of this was a certain loneliness in studies, as her lessons were separate, and this begat a certain loneliness of habits. Her early taste for reading compensated for this in a certain degree, but she thus formed a habit of rather desultory reading. This reading was in great measure directed by the accidental circumstances which had influenced her father in forming his library. It was rich in travels and history. His Indian connection, and the fact of his possessing estates, not only in India and Ceylon, but also in the Mauritius, and afterwards in Australia and New Zealand, gave him an interest in foreign, and especially in Eastern countries. The library had large and well-executed maps hanging against the walls, of unusual size and fulness. These maps were Augusta's delight; she habitually studied them, and devoured every book of travels, tracing Bruce, Lewis, and a host of other travellers on the big maps. Her father also possessed a collection of valuable bibliographical reprints, all Dibdin's biographical works, several publications of the Roxburghe Club, including a magnificent edition of "Morte d'Arthur," with facsimiles, coloured, of old illuminations, a Sarum missal (as it was called), though really a Book of Hours, several antiquarian collections and archæological treatises, which had a marvellous charm for his daughter as she grew older.

The gem of her father's house, in the opinion of his daughter, was this library, a pretty room with books all round it. "We were not," she says, "allowed indiscriminate reading; nevertheless, I think, by the time I was twelve, I had contrived to read whatever was readable in that library in prose and verse. I consider it was a Providence that I had at that time a passion for Natural History and Natural Science. The delight I took in reading about Minerals and Chemistry drew me away from what I should otherwise infallibly have made my exclusive reading, namely, poetry and fiction. And I think if children could only be encouraged in a taste for collections of some sort, it would be the best safeguard against too much novel-reading. My collections were without number, perfectly valueless, but affording also a most innocent pastime.

"In my early days one taste dominated over every other, and that was Natural History. My own child's library included books (chiefly birthday presents) on minerals, plants, and insects. What I learnt from my books I proceeded to investigate out of doors, and at eight years old was an authority on all matters connected with ants and bees, whose habits I studied with a perseverance that caused my mother serious anxiety. Moreover, I claimed it as my right to have a holiday whenever the bees were expected to swarm, as it was regarded as my duty to watch the hives, and give the alarm. All the privilege I claimed in return for my arduous duty was permission to spend the day under the hedge with a book, and in these bee-swarming holidays I managed to read my first poems. Thomson's 'Seasons' and Goldsmith's 'Traveller' were among those I most delighted in. 'Rasselas' and 'Robinson Crusoe' were also first read among the beehives.

"My father and brother pursued their mechanical and scientific amusements in a loft over the toolhouse. In this loft were a magnificent turning-lathe, an apparatus for distilling, and various other charming things. Here I spent many delightful hours, 'furtive moments,' not unfrequently stolen from the schoolroom. Here my brother and I made ourselves happy, chopping our hands to pieces, burning ourselves and our clothes with chemicals and distilling very indifferent rose-water, whilst my father often produced very beautiful works in ivory from his lathe."

Augusta was considered what is called a naughty child, passionate and excitable, a disposition resulting in great measure from the effects of a brain-fever in very early infancy.

To illustrate this, an intimate friend relates that once when Augusta was a very small child, her two elder sisters had been enriched by silver medals, which they all greatly admired. She was promised one on condition that "she was not naughty for a week together." Looking at the coveted medals intently, the little one sighed, and exclaimed: "Dood for a whole week? Impossib!"

This excitable disposition was considered her worst fault; but what was far more serious, as she used afterwards to say, was her habitual disposition to follow inclination. "I studied what I liked, and the lesson I disliked was always neglected. No one ever had a fault to find with me when geography, history, or poetry made up the day's lessons; but black Wednesday came with English grammar and arithmetic, and then I was invariably in disgrace. It was the same with everything: I habitually followed inclination, and could not resist, and this begat a fatal weakness of will. This was not so explained to my own conscience at the time, and the only result of my frequent disgraces was to impress me with a sense of incurable naughtiness, which overclouded my mind.

"To my brain-fever may perhaps be ascribed the nervous susceptibility which was often a cause of suffering. Physically tolerably brave, I was excessively timid on certain points. My imagination depicted every sort of terror behind a drawn curtain or in a dark room. To cure this, which he considered an unpardonable weakness, my brother used to make me run round the shrubberies in the dark, and stand behind the long damask curtains. I believe he had no idea of the intensity of my sufferings. Proper religious instruction would no doubt have corrected all this, but I was profoundly ignorant of religion. With an intense belief in God as a Spirit, my religious sense was exclusively one of fear. I always said my prayers, and prayed very earnestly to be good; but as I did not grow good, I fancied God did not and would not hear me, and, like every one else, He thought me too bad to mend. Of Christianity I comprehended nothing.

"Our parish church at Bromley was a beautiful little structure, the remains of an old Convent Chapel. Its history is given in Lyson's 'Environs of London.' But I have no idea connected with that church except excessive weariness at the long sermons. When in town, we only went to church in the mornings; when in the country, we also went to the afternoon service, which I liked considerably better, I suppose because it was shorter. Our religious instruction in the schoolroom was dry in the extreme. The Protestant Catechism; the Gospels and Epistles, read through, a chapter each day; some, but not much, Scripture history. No part of the Old Testament were we allowed to read, and my knowledge of Old Testament history, up to the time of my going to school, was gathered from some child's 'Stories from Scripture.' We said the Church Catechism, but I cannot call to mind any explanation ever given me on religious subjects.

"My sister Louisa was, however, better instructed than I was. She, as a child, had a tender devotion to the Passion of our Lord, and a comprehension of the scheme of Redemption, with which I was wholly unfamiliar. I presume these must have been taught my sisters when I was not present. I distinctly remember the surprise Louisa caused me by telling me, one day when we were ventilating our childish ideas, that no one would ever have been saved if our Lord had not died. I yielded the point of Adam and Eve, but pleaded hard for Abraham. 'No,' she replied, 'without our Lord not even Abraham.' 'I shall never believe that,' I exclaimed; 'the rest if you like—but not Abraham!'"

As to religious impressions, the very earliest recollection she could recall is connected with the reading of the Psalms of the day in her father's dressing-room, "a little function which took place every morning. It was my custom, when our nursery-breakfast was over, to descend to his room, and clamour at the door until I was admitted. As soon as my father's toilet was complete, the door was unlocked, and I entered, generally accompanied by the kitten of the period on my shoulder. My duty was to read aloud the morning Psalms, and when they were complete, the kitten and I were lifted on to the top of a certain chest of drawers and desired to keep quiet, whilst my father knelt down and said his morning prayers to himself. I felt a great sentiment of seriousness and respect during this singular domestic ceremony, and can even now recall the feeling, made up of so many impressions; the open window looking into the garden, the sweet morning air and sound of the birds, the profound silence in the room, and the sight of my father's kneeling figure.

"Our beautiful little parish church at Bromley became in time too small for the congregation. My father, who took great interest in it as an architectural gem, had contrived one year to get himself elected churchwarden, for the purpose of having the opportunity of cleaning and restoring it after his own fashion. He created a great revolution; knocked away plaster and whitewash, opened some beautiful Norman arches, and discovered the old convent cemetery, with the bodies of several nuns perfectly preserved, with leather rings round their fingers. These bodies he saved from profanation, and insisted on seeing buried again with propriety; for it had been proposed to make a *show* of them! When it was decided to pull down the little church and rebuild it, my father resisted to the utmost of his power. The Catholics offered to purchase it, and he supported their petition; anything rather than that it should be destroyed. However, that could not be allowed, and destroyed it was, and the present red brick hideosity erected on its site."

Augusta was nearly seven years old before she could pronounce the hard consonents. "It was a source of constant humiliation to me," she writes, "the rather that my elders, instead of trying to make me get over the difficulty, amused themselves with my funny lingo, and made no efforts to cure me. Hence, while my education advanced, and I was able to repeat the English kings and queens, they were always 'tins and tweens;' and if required to exhibit my playing of the scales, I always called it 'playing my *tails*.' As I grew older, and became conscious of the defect, it caused me great anguish; and one day when I heard Kitty, the cook, remark, 'Bless the child, she can't say *kitchen* yet' (for I called it titsen), I vowed an inward vow that I would retire to some solitude, and never come forth till kitchen had been said. I sought for the solitude in a part of the shrubbery where some thick laurel bushes grew, and behind them ensconced myself with the fixed determination to remain there all day and all night if need be, so that I might issue forth a conqueror. By dint of immense effort I mastered the difficulty, and got our 'kitchen!' loud and distinct. Then in a transport of excitement, I rushed out of my hiding-place, and finding no one about to whom to communicate my newly-acquired gift, I bolted to the kitchen window and thrust in my head, shouting, 'Here, Kitty, Liddy, Judy—come quick.' They all ran to the spot, expecting to have to bind up a cut, or set a broken arm, and when I had them before me, all I said was '*Kitchen!*' When my dear mother heard of this, she said 'Just like the child; she would die without sympathy!' a bit of character reading worthy of a mother."

As the family consisted of one brother, the eldest, and three girls, in their childish games he naturally took the lead. He used to drill his three sisters, taught them sword exercise, and, with true schoolboy instinct, made them bowl that he might bat. Sometimes he introduced his school friends to his little sisters. About one of these schoolfellows an amusing story is related.

"A schoolfellow of my brother's, whom we were very fond of, was called Oswald. I always thought it was his Christian name, but it was not. Oswald was perfection, and the very pink of courtesy. He often came and spent days with us, and joined in our amusements, though a little older than my brother. One day we were soldiering as usual, my brother in a uniform, ourselves in brown holland. My sister Louisa, who was a delicate child and easily tired, had attempted to escape to the schoolroom; had been seized, tried as a deserter, and condemned to be shot. Tied by her long hair to a laurel bush, with her hands fastened behind her, my sister Cecilia and myself were levelling our muskets at her, waiting our captain's word of command, when a servant came from the house to say that 'Mr. Oswald was coming down the garden.' What a moment! the captain did not like to be seen in uniform, and we (that is, Cecilia and myself, were conscious of a certain amount of dishevelled hair and dirty faces. So we all flung down our arms and fled. Ten minutes sufficed to put the captain into plain clothes and to adjust our toilets, and we returned to the spot to find 'Mr. Oswald' engaged in untying the poor little deserter and unfastening her hair, for in our terror we had not remembered that she could not run with us.

"The sequel of this story happened only a few years ago. My eldest sister, then married, was informed by her husband that he had invited a gentleman to dinner to whom he wished special attention to be paid. He was Oswald, the African traveller, the companion of Dr. Livingstone in his first expedition, who had delivered Livingstone from a lion, and whose portrait is engraved in that traveller's book, killing the lion and saving the missionary's life. He came, was introduced, and proved very delightful. In the midst of dinner, something was said that made him look very hard at my sister, and at last he cried out: 'I do believe you are Cecilia Drane!' 'Why, to be sure, and you must be Oswald!' And Oswald it was. Then he reminded her that the very last time he had seen her and us was on this occasion, and as he said, not even in the wilds of Africa had he ever forgotten the picture of the poor deserter tied by her hair, and the retreating file of soldiers.

"One circumstance entered a good deal into our education as children: we saw a great variety of places. My dear mother's health rendered it almost impossible for her to live in London for many months together, and in 1828 it was so seriously affected by the death of both her parents, within a short space of each other, and the departure of her three brothers for India, that my father decided on giving her an entire change, and took a large house in North Wales, where we removed with all our family belongings.

"It was the poem of my father's existence. After he definitively left London, his wish was to have purchased Plas-madoc, and there end his days. My mother prudently dissuaded him; but though he yielded the point, Plas-madoc always remained the dream of his heart. It was a large ugly house, but situated in a paradise, half-way up the mountain-side in the vale of Llanrwst, and commanding a view of a mountain world beyond. I was but five years old when we went there, but the outline of those mountains, the smell of pine-tree plantations, the delightful cherry-trees with seats built among their branches, into which I could climb and sit, gazing at the mountains; my adventures on my brother's back when he took me out fishing with him, and I crossed rivers in that predicament; my rides on my Welsh pony Merilin, who chose once to run away with me and gallop to his own home, pursued by a groom clattering behind me, the sound of whose horse's hoofs only made Merilin gallop the faster; the church, with the Welsh service, and Mr. Davis, the good-tempered Welsh parson; my terror at the small, wild mountain cattle we encountered in our walks, and the intensely romantic interest awakened by a visit to Conway Castle—all this lives in my memory with the freshness of yesterday."

Bexhill in Sussex, was one of her early recollections. "My grandfather lived there in a big white house, with gardens and fields annexed, and we spent part of every year there with him. It was about six miles west of Hastings, and half a mile from the sea—not the calm, voluptuous, blue expanse of Devonshire, but a sea constantly more or less stormy, breaking on a wild desolate beach, extending along a flat coast from Hastings to Beachy Head. I loved its desolation, so wild and melancholy. We travelled down about two or three times a week for our sea-bath, always driving in a pony-carriage down the 'sea-lane,' and returning in time for breakfast. In that 'sea-lane' grew delicious flowers and mosses; and to crown its delight, it had a pond full of insects, and in that pond, dear to memory, I beheld for the first time the process of gnats and dragon-flies emerging from their chrysalis state. The sea occasionally burst over the high beach and inundated the low lands beyond. On one of these occasions it flooded a field full of early lambs, drowning them all. I wept bitter tears over their untimely fate, and never passed the field without a sigh.

"Bexhill Church was a curious old country structure. It had once possessed a famous east window of painted glass, which Horace Walpole bought, took out of the church, and put into his fancy 'Gothic Chapel' at Strawberry Hill! I think I rather liked going to church at Bexhill, and the very first attraction I ever felt towards religion was inspired within that church, or rather I think at Prittlewell, by a sermon in which the preacher took for his text the words, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' They retain a sweetness still, after many years, and I often recall them."

Almost the only Catholic idea of her childhood, she used to say, was connected with Bexhill. In the library of her grandfather's house there she found one of the most bigoted Protestant books ever written, "Father Clement." It delighted her, but did not teach her the lesson intended by the writer. The Jesuit priest, Clement Dormer, is represented as really converted to Protestantism, and the whole book is a furious tirade against Popery and Jesuits. "But somehow," says Miss Drane, "the character of Clement Dormer, his fasting and hair-shirts, has a Catholic tone about it, and is so infinitely more attractive than that of the married parson and the sour Calvinistic Ernest, that our sympathies were all on the side of Father Clement. I hated the Calvinists and I loved the Papists in that book, and felt glad that Clement had not got so far as 'to declare himself a Calvinist' when he died. Father Clement's Holy Week sermon on the Passion, in that book, was the first thing that gave me any ideas at all on that sacred subject."

She always considered that she owed, in a measure, her enthusiasm for English History to the associations of Bexhill and its neighbourhood. Battle Abbey was close by, the place where William the Conqueror landed. But what perhaps more than anything affected her imagination was Ashburnham Park. The Earl of Ashburnham is the lineal descendant of the faithful follower of Charles I. He attended the unhappy king on the scaffold, and preserved as precious relics the suit of clothes in which he had been beheaded. The black velvet doublet, fine cambric shirt, and rich lace collar were all kept in a glass-case on the right-hand side of the communion table, where the altar had once been, like true relics of the Martyr King. If they wanted repair, no one ever touched them but the Countess herself, a stern old lady, about whom many interesting stories were told. It was an extraordinary place. Within the precincts of the house were the parish church, as well as establishments for every trade that could be wanted by the proprietors—a carpenter's shop, a smithy, as well as a butcher's and baker's business. This was the real origin of every English village, though perhaps nowhere could it be seen so much in its primitive condition.

It was during one of the visits of the family to Bexhill that her brother, then preparing for Cambridge, was taken seriously ill. It was some time before he could leave his sofa, and he amused his leisure hours by writing out a series of lessons on Astronomy and Natural Philosophy, one of which was given each week to his sister Augusta to be learnt and repeated to him. They were clearly written, and illustrated by diagrams. " I liked the special attention," says his sister, " and profited so well from my lessons, that my brother declared that I ought to begin Euclid, and Euclid therefore I began. I succeeded pretty well. This was in 1833, and I was not yet ten. My mother did not regard our studies as very serious, and was rather glad that I should have something to keep me from my ordinary restless pursuits after beetles and butterflies. The reigning governess protested, of course, but protested in vain, and during the whole of that winter I studied much more of Euclid than of French grammar. This did not satisfy my brother. He looked into my arithmetic, and found me lamentably deficient ; it all came, he said, of those stupid girls' methods—what I wanted was algebra, and to algebra I was set. I hated arithmetic, and never got beyond the rule of three ; but I took greatly to algebra, and when we returned to Bromley continued my studies in that line, his lessons being always given in the garden under the trees, which made them all the more pleasant."

It was at Bexhill that a childish adventure with her brother happened that is worth recording in her own words. On the common there were many parts thickly covered with furze, so thickly as to admit no path. " We determined to push our way through one of these furze-covered tracts, and at first we managed pretty well.

But in the thickest part we stuck fast. My little leggings were torn to shreds, and the small legs were full of thorns and bleeding. ‘ Had not we better go back ? ’ I said to my brother. ‘ No,’ replied he, ‘ it would be shameful to be conquered ; besides, the way back is as long as to go forward. Push on till we get to the end ; we shall reach it in time.’ So on we pushed, at each step a scratch. But each step brought us nearer to the end. At last we were through. It was an immense triumph, and to this day it stands in my memory as a parable of perseverance, and the success which attends a patient plodding on through difficult bits, in spite of scratches and torn leggings.

“ I cannot take leave of Bexhill without mentioning what after all was its chief attraction to me. The sea at low water receded a great distance, leaving a broad expanse of firm golden sands, with here and there promontories of black seaweed rocks. How I revelled on those sands ! Sometimes we galloped our ponies over them, oftener we wandered about gathering shells and crabs, and drinking in the singularly solemn beauty of that wide flat expanse. My imagination was always at work in such scenes. I thought it was like the desert, and I was a wandering Arab. Again it was to me such a mystery to be walking about on ground which I knew an hour later would be covered with the tossing waves. I used to try and draw the sea, the sands, and the black rocks, failing signally, but always retaining the same sense of their wild picturesque charm.

“ My grandfather’s house, after his death, was occupied by Dom Miguel, the exiled legitimate King of Portugal, and a Catholic Chapel was added to it for him. It is curious that Plas-madoc likewise passed into Catholic hands, and that Mass is said there now, I believe, or was some time ago, as I accidentally heard. Almost every one of my childish haunts has now some Catholic association.”

Tunbridge Wells also was one of the resorts of her childhood, and its neighbourhood was connected with an incident that first brought to her mind some idea of angels and supernatural protection. "My father and brother were both with us on one of the commons, and were amusing themselves by leaping over the furze bushes. My brother leaped over one and disappeared. We thought he was hiding. So we ran round to catch him, and to our horror discovered that the bush grew on the edge of a deep gravel pit, into which he had fallen. But not only so, he fell at the corner, and on looking over, we saw that this corner was occupied by a shed and a number of carts, on any of which had he fallen he must have been killed. But a bundle of straw and manure was between them, and on that one soft spot he fell. My father found him, much shaken of course, but with no serious injury. My mother said it must have been his guardian angel who made him fall just there. I think it was the first notion I received of such protection, and I remembered the words, 'In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone' (Ps. xc. 12)."

When Augusta was about twelve years old, as a governess at home was no longer necessary for her sisters, it was decreed she should be sent to school: "A sad decree it was to me, and I well remember the preparatory pangs. Of late years I had grown into habitual interior sadness and aptitude to melancholy. I believe it was in part the dawn of the poetic sensibility in me, and in part the absence of religious faith and hope. I felt a great crisis was at hand, a break-up of the old home life; I felt parting with it all in a way impossible to express, and during the last sad week visited all my old haunts with impassioned but silent anguish, waterng them with my tears. The loft, the turning-lathe, the beehives, my kitten and my squirrel, etc., nothing was forgotten. 'I shall never see them again,' I exclaimed, and when mother and sister reasoned with me that I should see them again at mid-summer, I answered, with a deeper truth than they understood, 'They will not be the same!' Perhaps this little trait best describes the character of the development which was going on within me. I understood nothing about it, but I was conscious of a surging emotion, and a continual habit of reflection on mental phenomena which those around me appeared not to notice."

Before this, her reading had been wonderful for her age. On this point she confided to a friend that "I was just eleven years old when I read Sully's 'Memoirs' in four volumes. We had some fine bronze busts of Sully and Henri Quatre, and looking constantly at them made me desire to know something about them. Robertson's 'History of America' was a very early favourite, and Columbus my first hero. Afterwards I knew Robertson's 'Charles V.' almost by heart. Hume's 'History of England' I read, and detested.

"Bryant's 'Ancient Mythology' fascinated me and embedded in my mind a conviction of the truth of the Book of Genesis, by reason of its harmonies with the traditions scattered among the mythologies of Persia, India, and the rest, which all the wild talk and wild writing of the present-day critics will never have power to shake. I used to live in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis at one time." No date is given for this, and it may have been later.

Another remembrance was this: "As a child I devoured an amazing number of Voyages and Travels. I am sure I could not get through them now. All Clarke's big volumes—they cultivated my geographical tastes, and I pictured to myself all the places described. When very small, I was given a little book on Belzoni, which aroused in me a great interest for Egypt and the Pryamids, and afterwards I read with delight Wilkinson's work in three volumes, and still retain the impression.

His account of that old ante-historical Egyptian world excited the same sort of interest as Bryant had done.

"But we had an old black-letter copy of Holinshed, bound in oak, the early Anglo-Saxon portion of which is entirely from Catholic sources. I lived in it. It was from that source I drew all my acquaintance with S. Guthlac and S. Dunstan, and the other English Saints. I had such love for S. Guthlac and Croyland that I kept a little print of Croyland as a relic."

"I had read Milton and Homer," she once wrote to a friend, "before I went to school, and a good many other books, not children's books, like Sully's 'Memoirs,' Hume's 'History of England,' and Burder's 'Oriental Customs.' Sharon Turner's 'History' I read at school, and loved.

"As to Poetry, I cannot remember when I first read Spenser, but I had a love for him; his caves and dragons, knights and hermits, were real to me. Shakespeare we all knew pretty well, and he gave me a taste for English History.

"Bishop Horne's Sermons first attracted me to the Symbolism of the Scriptures. His exposition of the mystical sense of Eden and the Tree of Life, as something sacramental, pointing to a greater Sacrament, is entirely Catholic in tone.

"Butler's 'Analogy,' most wonderful gift to non-Catholic readers, was more philosophical than most books that fell into my hands. I did not read it, however, till later, when living at S. Mary Church.

"Several books of Biblical interest were earlier; as, for instance, Horne's 'Introduction to the Scriptures,' and Burder's 'Oriental Customs'; the latter of no doctrinal tendency, but valuable because it gave me an interest in Bible reading and illustration.

"Another book familiar to me from earliest childhood was Izaak Walton's 'Complete Angler,' a queer book for a child. But anything on Natural History had a charm, and then the delicious scent of fields and primroses and old English country scenery in that book was delightful. It was a valuable copy with prints, and I seemed to sit in the little inn parlour with Izaak and his companion, and loved them for being Cavaliers."

"Books are Providences," she used to say. "They have as much to do with forming our lives as friends, or even more. Up to the age of nineteen, I had few friends, but I had read many books."

Certainly few girls of eleven would care to read Sully's "Memoirs," and fewer still would delight in a black-letter edition of Holinshed. It is evident she was no ordinary school-girl.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that at the school conducted by the two Miss Jameses in Kensington, to which Augusta was sent, she was at once at the head. But she was not prim and neat enough to please Miss Ann James. "Her cold grey eyes looked particularly cold when, with faultless neatness, she was putting in the fatal back dots which cancelled all my scholastic gains. I fear I revenged myself by sometimes drawing caricatures of her caps, each of which rivalled its predecessor in ugliness."

She had been placed at once in the first class, in which most of the girls were sixteen and seventeen years old; and though she was only just past twelve, she easily kept at the head. Miss Mary James was mistress of the first class, and she was a lady admirably qualified for cultivating and finishing a young mind. She took to Augusta, thoroughly understood her, comprehended the causes of her external faults, and was tolerant of them. "She reasoned with me kindly, as though I possessed the capacity of seeing and understanding, and my heart, which had hardened itself in pride at the rebukes of the old governess rule, melted at the treatment of my first real friend. She has long since passed away, but never shall I cease to cherish with respect the memory of that good soul, from whom I learnt all I know of patience in dealing with other souls, and the magic of sympathy and reason.

"Her efforts to civilise and subjugate me were greatly assisted by the fact of our having many kindred tastes. She, too, loved Natural History, and knew a great deal more about it than I did. She had a fine cabinet of minerals, loved geology, taught me botany and botanised with me, while her knowledge of English literature and her correct taste were a great delight to me. Twice every week the first-class assembled in her study, and read prose and poetry with her, she explaining, criticising and eliciting criticisms from us. This was real mental expansion. We read Milton, studying him with all the allusions. I had read him at home, and Eden was as familiar as our own garden. We read also my old friend Thomson, Robertson's 'Charles V.,' Tasso's 'Gerusalemme,' and a vast number of other standard books; and we read everything thoroughly. I began to write verses, and she read and corrected them, instead of laughing at my small attempts.

"Another gain was our Biblical lessons. Every morning we had an hour of Bible study. I delighted in the Bible class, which took place every morning before breakfast. I had never before been allowed to read the Old Testament. Now we read and learnt by heart an immense number of chapters, and it was all fresh and beautiful to me. We chose our own chapters. I generally chose Isaias or the Epistle to the Hebrews. We were all obliged to learn and say daily a portion of Psalm 118. How often I have since been glad of it!

"Miss Ann James considered me wanting in 'Vital Christianity' (in which she was quite right), and regarded me therefore with suspicion. Her ultra-Calvanism, and the horrid little proprietary chapel to which she took us on Sundays, the long Evangelical sermons we had to listen to and write from memory, and the hymns, not remarkable for poetry, that she made us learn by heart, did not increase my attraction to religion; but Mary James qualified all this by giving me the 'Christian Year' and Miss Jewsbury's 'Letters to the Young,' which did me real and lasting good."

It was at school also that she first read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Speaking of it in after years, she used to say: "We delighted in it at school, where I first saw it. Let people say what they like, Christian's deliverance from his burden at the sight of the Cross is one of the most perfect things in the English language. I really believe the book, heretical as it is, has touched many a soul in a very profitable manner. The sight of the City, and the Shining Ones on the walls—well, all that was a possession. I used to think, after reading it, that I should like to go on pilgrimage.

"We also studied conchology at school. Miss Mary James had a collection of shells, sufficient to teach from, but not equal to my mother's, which was unique, and shells always had, and have, their poetic side to me—partly from association with my mother, no doubt, partly because of their wonderful beauty. That God should create such beauty, such exquisite forms, and delicate colouring and fragile material, to be buried far out of sight at the bottom of the ocean, is a continual marvel. I have never repented the time that I have given to these natural pursuits, though I cultivated none at all profoundly or accurately. I was at best a smatterer. But the smattering all went to build up the one article of my creed, 'Credo in Deum.'"

But with all this, she was not happy at school; and when it was settled that the family were to remove to Devonshire, she returned home.

For a fortnight she was alone with her father in the old home, seeing him only in the evenings, and given up to her own thoughts. "The old home empty! All my childhood present, yet passing away for ever. I used to sit at the old schoolroom window and think, and think. The result of my thoughts I embodied in a little manuscript written in an autobiographical form, something after the fashion of St. Augustine's 'Confessions,' and into it I poured the thoughts and memories of my heart. I was but thirteen and a half, and still a child in many respects, and having written my 'Apologia,' I put it into the drawer where I kept my squirrel's nuts,—and then forgot it. There my aunt discovered it; and after her death about ten years ago, it was found among her papers by her executors, and at my desire committed to the flames."

After her return from school she began to write a large amount of poetry, sitting by herself in the old deserted schoolroom of her childish days. "From this state I was rescued by a cousin who had lately married, and whose husband—Joseph—took a kind interest in me. He was clever, well educated, widely read in English and foreign literature, philosophical in his tone of mind, and brilliant in his powers of debate and conversation. My father used to say of him and his brother Christopher that they had never got beyond Dr. Johnson, and there was a certain old-fashioned preciseness in their style, but still they thought and made others think. One day, as we came in from church, Joseph remarked 'What nonsense we talk in church! I wonder how much any one understands of it all!' I flamed up in all the argumentative power of fourteen. 'Well, then,' he replied, 'what do *you* mean by "of one Substance with the Father?"' 'Substance!' I said, and stopped—I was completely floored, 'Well, what is Substance?' 'Substance is *that*, I suppose,' I said, knocking the table with my knuckle. 'Indeed! and what was *that* to do with the Holy Trinity?' he inquired. I saw at once that there was something into which I had no glimpse of comprehension. *Substance* was evidently something distinct from matter. I did not know what it was, but I began to see clearly what it was *not*, and years later, when the question of the Holy Eucharist first presented itself to my mind, I found my understanding had been cleared of all the philosophical difficulties which beset the ordinary Protestant mind.

"This gentleman, if he believed in anything, believed in the Catholic Church. At least he used to argue that logically the grounds of the Catholic claims were unanswerable. How he escaped the conclusion, that if so the Catholic Church was true, I know not; but at that time I had no sympathy with his views, though he considerably modified my own."

Meanwhile Mr. Drane had resolved to retire from business and live in the country. Always devoted to country life and pursuits, he hated the counting-house and longed for release. He had sustained severe losses in business, but still remained in sufficiently easy circumstances to establish himself wherever he liked and to live as he pleased. Accident took him to Devonshire, and, enchanted with the scenery, he fixed on Babbacombe as his future home, thus breaking away from every tie of friends, and transporting his family into a perfectly strange neighbourhood. At last, in the summer of 1837, they left London. Of this journey she writes:—

"The Great Western Railway was not open. My father had no fancy for the mail-coach, so he decided to go by steamer, a decision entirely to my taste. We made the long steam voyage down the Thames and along the whole southern coast. It delighted me. Here were new scenes indeed, and old scenes too, for we passed the old line of coast which I had not visited for four years—Hastings, Bexhill, Beachy Head. The steamer went no farther than Exmouth, but my father hired a sailing boat, and in it we sped across the bay, and landed in Babbacombe just in time for breakfast.

"Any one who only knows Babbacombe as it now is, can form no idea of its perfect beauty forty years ago.

It contained seven houses, and no more. The downs above were wide, unenclosed, and lonely in their expanse. Torquay was just emerging from the fishing-town, and had not yet become the watering-place. There was no railway nearer than Salisbury. The Torquay shops were so few and so barbarous, that, when we wanted to shop, we drove to Exeter, over the beautiful Haldon Hills. Between Torquay and Babbacombe the country was perfectly unbroken by houses; and in the fields now occupied by Bishopstowe I have seen the pheasants feeding in the quiet evenings."

Miss Drane literally revelled in all this beauty, and used to say that she got at this time into rather idle habits, though she cultivated drawing assiduously. However, it was now that she began to feel interest in Church History, and read Mosheim and Milner, and was satisfied with neither; also she read William Wilberforce's "Personal Love of God," which exercised a marked influence on her religious feelings. She thus describes the growth of her religious knowledge:—

"But above all other influences under which my mind and my religious sense ever fell, was that of the preaching of our Vicar, George May Coleridge, nephew to the poet, cousin to the Judge. He was a man of profound patristic learning; his sermons were something you could never hear twice in this world. For the first time in my life I listened to *dogma*. I learnt to believe, and to know that I believed in the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Church, the Sacramental system. I learnt to read the Scripture as interpreted by the Prayer-book. I learnt to love the Prayer-book, to love the mystical sense, too, of the Sacred Text, and to all this I applied myself with an inexplicable ardour. I scarcely knew how many new ideas were growing in my mind; but still they existed in my mind only. I do not think I was, in point of fact, gaining many religious habits, or practising many degrees more of self-restraint. Still, it was an education, and sowed in me the seeds of faith.

"In 1839 I was confirmed, and went to Communion for the first time; but I had then no ideas on that subject differing from the ordinary Protestant view. Besides, I had still too much of the child in me to go very deep into all this."

The winter of 1839 and the spring of 1840 were spent in London, and Miss Drane had a first glimpse of London Society; but in the midst of the pleasant reunions, she always felt something knocking at her heart, saying, "You are not meant for all this." What she was meant for she could not yet guess.

"In London that winter I first heard Mass. A ward of my father's, a Catholic, was staying with us, and he took her to Mass on Sunday, and me with her. I understood, nothing, and liked nothing of what I saw; and on returning said, 'Well, I have been to Mass for the first time in my life; I think it will probably be the last.'"

In the winter of 1840, one sister being abroad, and the other in Exeter, and her father in London, Augusta was left alone with her mother in Babbacombe, and they were drawn more closely together than ever before. Some one asked Mrs. Drane whether she did not find Babbacombe dull during the dreary winter months, and to Augusta's intense delight she replied, "I am never dull with Robin." These words were music in her ears.

At this time she began to have a clearer comprehension of Catholic doctrine, and to understand more fully Mr. Coleridge's teaching. She read Sewell's "Christian Morals," also the "Lives of the Saints," edited by Newman, Isaac Williams' poems, and a large number of the earlier Oxford publications. She thus sums up the result of all this religious study—

"My first conclusion from all these new ideas was distinctly Roman, but relinquishing the idea as a spectre, I endeavoured to work myself into Anglican Orthodoxy, and fancied I had done so with success, though in reality I never had. The event proved otherwise."

Her father strongly disapproved of his daughter's High Church tendencies, and this was a source of pain to her heart, while at the same time the outburst of new ideas, and finding at last a system of religious belief for which she felt true sympathy, was a deep delight. There were many sources of happiness at that time. " I love to recall happy mornings, 'when dewy turf was air to wingèd feet;' the sunrises seen from Anstey's Cove; the first commencement of daily service at S. Mary's Church; expeditions with dear friends, partly Church Antiquity hunting, partly violet gathering, partly the frolic of young hearts that greatly loved one another and delighted in the Alma Mater of Nature, and scorned the world's ways. All this sweetened and softened me; I felt the sun had burst through my clouds at last, and often thanked God for making the world so beautiful, and human hearts so lovable. Yet often, too, I felt in my brightest moments a conviction that it would not last; that I should end in another way; the sweetness was too sweet; and something seemed to whisper that the future would open a chasm between me and all I so loved:—

'I hear a voice you cannot hear, which says I must not stay,
I see a hand you cannot see, which beckon me away.'

"My father delighted in expeditions to Dartmoor, and we often gathered baskets full of scented orchis in the Ipplepen woods, and their perfume is associated with that time. We also explored the Dart, and Dartmouth had an especial interest for me. Then there were pretty frequent visits to Exeter, where we had several friends, old and new, and the Cathedral was like an open door of heaven to me. There was one anthem I could never listen to without emotion: 'O that I had wings like a dove—like a dove, and then would I fly away, I would fly away, away; I would fly, I would fly away—I would fly away and be at rest!' The repetition of the words increased their meaning, and somehow the musical notes seemed to get among the arches of the Cathedral, and literally to fly and float about like the dove, and took my spirit flying about there with them."

Nearer home, she was greatly interested in Haccombe, the seat of Sir Walter Carew, standing amid its own woods, profoundly sequestered in a little glen near the Teyn. The house was hideous, but close to it is the church, a parish church without a parish, for the mansion is the only house within it. It is is a great curiosity, containing unaltered the old screen and encaustic tiles, and the old tombs of the Crusaders.

"But after all, it was the sea and the sea-coast, the red rocks mixed with limestone cliffs, the glassy bay so seldom ruffled, so intensely blue and calm, all so full of colour, and the colour so variable, that was the one feature of Nature I so greatly loved. There is literally not a cranny in those cliffs I have not explored at one time or other. Once, near Hope's Nose, investigating a very wild part of the coast on foot, my brother and I came upon a fox's den. There were five foxes, and they stared at us, and we at them.

"I have spoken of George May Coleridge, and I will add a few more reminiscences of one to whom, more than any other, I owe my Christianity. He was exceedingly shy, and lived a retired life, and the fact of not meeting him among the upper-class parishioners in society was one secret, I think, of his spiritual influence over many of us. No one could attach any other sort of association to him than that which attached to him in his pulpit and reading-desk. I add his reading-desk, for he had a marvellous gift as a reader. It was not fine reading, any more than it was eloquent preaching, but a simple impressive skill in giving the whole sense of every word and every phrase. Antony Froude, no mean judge, remarked this as one of his great gifts in preaching his funeral sermon, and said of him, that 'he made the Bible speak like a living thing.' He was passionately fond of music, and my sister and myself were among the favoured few occasionally invited to the only social receptions he ever gave, which were musical evenings. His library was full of the Fathers. In his hall stood a bust—a remarkable head, with hair drooping over the eyes, and a bar of development over the brow. The first time I saw it, and asked who it was, I saw a hesitation in his manner, as he answered, 'Don't you know? that is Newman.' Poor Mr. Coleridge! if ever heart and mind and soul lived shut up from sympathy with their fellows, they were his. It always seemed to me that only in preaching and reading did he pour himself out. Certain texts and passages are for ever linked in my mind with his voice and manner of uttering them."

One of the curates at this time was George Burder, who afterwards became a Catholic, and Abbot of Mount S. Bernard's.

II. ANGLICANISM

The Oxford movement was in progress, and through the teaching of Mr. Coleridge, the conversation of Mr. Burder, and the books she read, a great deal of the Oxford theology was filtering into Miss Drane's mind. The revival of Catholic ideas, which had begun with the Tracts for the Times, had not yet taken any alarming developments, Nothing was then heard of the vagaries of Ritualism, and no one yet spoke even of Confession. Miss Drane, indeed, had made up her own mind as to its necessity as early as 1839. When Mr. Maskell, who first agitated that question in the Church of England, heard this, he said, " Where you got the notion I can't think, but you were eight years in advance of your age." But at that early time, the idea of Confession in her mind was not connected with the forgiveness of sin by sacramental absolution, but she considered it as a way of knowing herself and being governed by another. Self-government seemed to her so difficult, she thought that another might help her to succeed better.

" In that same year, 1839," she says, " I had read, among other works, Burnet's ' History of the Reformation.' That book was the real cause of my conversion. I was too young (only sixteen), too little used to follow out my convictions to their logical issue, for the impression received from its study to produce at the time much practical effect; but in point of fact, not Burnet's own narrative, but the ' Original Documents,' printed in his alternate volumes, satisfied me, and would satisfy any one, of the fallacy of any theory which professes to regard the institution of Henry VIII., Cranmer, Edward VI., and Elizabeth, as any portion of the Catholic Church. Unawares to myself, a deep sense of its unreality was imbedded in my understanding. I built on it a superficial and rather romantic structure of

Anglicanism, made up of daily services and Cathedral anthems, high Tory enthusiasm for Charles I. and Archbishop Laud, love of antiquities and Church architecture, and intense sensibility to that picturesque view of the English parochial system, whereby souls are held captive in a false system, and deprived of the sacraments of grace by the despotism exerted over their imaginations by grey church towers hidden in foliage, and the sound of evening chimes, and the beautiful English Bible, and English collects, and a thousand other things which they love and worship and cling to, and cannot tear from their hearts; and which yet, subjected to that terrible analysis which, sooner or later, they must undergo, are all but chaff on the summer threshing-floor.

" I was specially under the influence of this particular 'chaff,' because at that time all my ideas were received, more or less, through sensible images. I was tyrannised over by my imagination, or, to speak more accurately, by the *senses*. We do not relish saying this of ourselves, but what is this susceptibility to beauty but a susceptibility to sense? Underneath, and undeveloped, I possessed, indeed, another set of faculties, the existence of which I then never so much as suspected; but at this particular period the Beautiful had far more power over me than the true.[1] The day came when the Beautiful was rudely shattered by a terrible blow; and not until then, when that dimly seen and dimly worshipped idol was in ruins, did my reason and understanding assert their just proportions, and I came to crave at all costs, for what was real, certain with the certainty of infallible Truth.

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[1] This is alluded to in " Songs in the Night "—

" O beauteous Nature, unto thee
  My erring youth was given;
Thy woods were once my holiest shrines,
  Thy skies my nearest heaven.
Baptized in tears, I see thee now,
  Reflecting in thy face,
A solemn light thou hadst not then,
  A more bewitching grace."

"So for a time the Beautiful took its place. Williams' poetry was to me, just then, its exponent. I thought, and still think, him superior as a poet to Keble. Anyhow he was my poet, and line after line of his expressed my innermost heart. But the radical want and defect of that heart was never touched, or but very lightly, by Anglicanism, whether in prose or verse. I was still ruled by impulse, perhaps in some matters by better impulse than formerly, but still I owned the sway of nothing but inclination; 'fond likings and fond hatings' tyrannised over me. This, in plain English, is im-mortification. It matters little whether we are beginning to practise fasting and watching, if at the same time we cannot command ourselves to do, or not to do, according to the rules of right reason. But this truth had not then taken a firm hold on my mind, and when I thought about mortification at all, I am afraid the Middle Ages mixed themselves up with my notions on the subject, and the particular exercise which commended itself to my choice was occasional *watching*. My bedroom looked over the sea, between which and me nothing intervened but the steep sloping garden. I literally looked down, through flowers, into the blue, silvery sea that lay below, murmuring over its pebbles—

'Still chanting on through nights and days
The sweet Non Nobis of its praise.'

Its voice through day and night was indeed like an unbroken chant. Well, it was my custom, and that pretty often, to watch the entire night by that window.

"I think I prayed, but I also spent the hours contemplating. Contemplating what? you will ask. I believe it was God, in so far as at that time I knew Him, and that was dimly enough. I gave myself up to contemplating Him in Nature, and listening to what He said to me in the light of the stars, and by the whisper of the pine-trees. For He did speak, and had always spoken, from early childhood to my heart and comprehension, through those exterior forms; and now that I had struggled out of heathenism into a certain element of Faith, all the truths of Faith symbolised themselves to me in Nature, and that to an extent I find it difficult to express. The world in its Beauty became to me like a great Sacrament, and 'the invisible things seemed clearly seen by the things that were visible' (Rom. i. 20). What I delighted in was to watch this beautiful world passing through all its phases of beauty successively, sunset, twilight, a summer night, then early dawn and the magnificent sunrise; and setting prudence and regularity at defiance, I over and over again have so watched it, and fed myself with a rapturous sense of beauties which are altogether undetected by eyes that only glance for a moment at Alma Mater, and cannot follow her from dewy eve to dewy sunrise without a sense of weariness. This experience I have warily introduced into 'Christian Schools and Scholars.'

"It is plain that my watching was rather self-indulgence than mortification; still I do not regret it, for these, and other erratic habits of my private life at that time, known to none, had their effect."

Not only at this time did Miss Drane contemplate the stars, but she framed philosophical notions about many social problems. One of her favourite ideas was about the superiority of poverty to riches. "My ideal, even of goodness, was so different from anything that was accepted as good and desirable by the world at large; and, oddly enough, one of the elements of that ideal was —Poverty. But of course, when you are so indiscreet as, in a crude undigested way, to blurt out before civilised ladies and gentlemen your deep conviction that poverty is better than riches, it is much the same as asking for a strait-jacket. I found it so, and learnt to be silent. But marrying and giving in marriage, farm and merchandise, London Seasons and the requirements of dress—all these things made a jumble in my mind, which I ticketed 'the world,' and held in abhorrence."

At this time she happened to hear an account of the missionary labours of Archbishop Polding in Australia read out loud, and it fired her with enthusiasm, "an enthusiasm coldly received by my Anglican friends, who called the Archbishop 'a propagandist.' I was stupid enough to reply, 'So were the Apostles,' but the remark gave scandal."

In 1844, when Miss Drane became twenty-one, her theories about poverty were put to a practical test by various losses suffered by her father, which brought the family into reduced circumstances. She bore the test well, and did much to soften the bitterness of the trial of altered fortunes for her father, who naturally felt it the most keenly. "As to my mother, the real beauty of her character never shone so brightly. Accustomed from girlhood to luxury and indulgence of every kind, she accommodated herself to the change as if there were nothing to sacrifice, and took on herself different habits of life with a facility and cheerfulness which was wonderful. I grew out of childish ways, and began to understand that the really beautiful thing in this world, the only beautiful, I may say, is unselfishness."

III. CONVERSION

Early in the year 1847 began a period of great interior trouble, which Miss Drane thus describes :—

"I began to be conscious that the religiousness which I had hitherto professed was in reality of no substance or worth, and very little more than a bundle of artistic tastes. At the same time I had come to feel the need of something earnest, something that would guide and support me in a time of difficulty.

"At first I could hardly believe that I did not possess it. I had worked my way, I may say, out of so many storms into an atmosphere which seemed by contrast so passionless and tranquil, that suddenly to have the veil torn rudely away, and to be made to see and know that it was all vanity and emptiness, unreal as a shadow, worthless as the veriest husks of the swine, was terrible indeed.

"Yet it was true. Be it remembered that deep down in my heart there was a *conviction*, but I had never looked it in the face. It lay there as whales may lie in the deep waters, and just come up at intervals to breathe. So also, it came to the surface now and then, to be thrust down again and ignored. But with *it* there, thus ignored, all the work at the surface was of no avail. My sister Louisa partly knew this, and used often to tell me I was one half Papist and the other half infidel. Of course I was, and so must every one be who with the Faith, or its germ in his heart, obeys and follows a different system.

"However, the truth was coming to the surface now, and manifesting itself with terrible earnestness. I did not at first see what would come of it, all I saw was the entire break up of my whole interior peace. I had nothing to rest on. I was like a person who has walked in fancied security on a plank, which suddenly gives way and leaves him in mid-air. It was dreadful suffering, and all that spring and summer I spent vainly struggling to make it out, and to free myself from what I can only compare to a serpent that had locked me in its folds."

The conviction lying in the depths of her soul was the truth, gradually assuming a definite shape in her mind, that she was not in the Catholic Church, and that she ought at any sacrifice to enter its fold. Her mind was too logical, and her character too sincere, to allow her to rest long in the utterly illogical and essentially fragmentary system of Anglicanism.

In the summer of 1847 Mr. Coleridge died, and she felt his loss acutely. He was succeeded as Vicar of S. Mary Church by Mr. Maskell, who, afterwards himself a Catholic, was then a follower of the Oxford movement, and of more advanced and decided views than his predecessor; but though Miss Drane had long felt the want of confession, "the idea of opening my mind to any one (*but a priest*, whispered conscience now and then) never suggested itself. It was a year of torture.

"In August, my mother and sister went to Scotland on some long-promised visits, and the process went on. Sometimes I tried to drive it all from me, but there was the terrible hand tearing away all disguises, pursuing me with that pitiless analysis of motives, that unbearable searching into every thought and act and habit of the past. What did I see? Absolutely nothing! A barren fig-tree, with leaves upon leaves, but no fruit. At last it became unbearable. An interior voice gave me this advice: 'What are you about? This all comes from your inveterate habit of self-inspection; you treat your soul as children treat flowers, picking them to pieces to see how they are made. Shut it all up, and have done with it. Life is made up of duty, and duty deals with facts, not fancies. Now just look at facts and do your duty, and all will go right.'

"This seemed excellent advice, and I resolved to follow it. With the strongest effort of the will (the will unaided by grace) I ever was conscious of, I turned my back on my troubles, drove away the image of them, and set about, by dint of a fixed resolve, to be happy and cheerful, and deal with facts.

"It was like fighting with an inundation. And the fact, the very little fact, that broke my dike and let in the pouring flood, till it roared and swept through my whole being, was so very little, I am afraid almost to name it. One wet autumn evening I was sitting buttoned up in my excellent resolution to deal with exterior facts, and to have nothing more to do with self-introspection, when an organ-grinder came to the garden door and played a tune. It was 'The Ivy Green'; I well remember it. I was one I had been used to hear, and it produced a strange effect; I can no more say why or how, than why or how any other mystery is wrought in souls by seeming trifles. It broke down my dike. I laid my head on the table, and sobbed for an hour; and there was an end of my resolutions.

"My mother came home from Scotland, and found me really ill—so ill that for weeks and weeks I kept my room and my bed, and had time and leisure enough to consider what I was to do. I had meekly to submit to the work of destruction being completed by that unseen hand that had set to work to tear away my plaster and whitewash. When it was all gone, and I saw my life 'perished without fruit,' I asked myself what remained to be done. Then, at last, the only true conviction of my soul spoke out, and made itself heard. Smothered for nearly nine years, at last it spoke, and spoke plainly—*Confession*, and to a *Catholic Priest*. *Confession*, to ease an overburdened heart, *to a Priest*, to get absolution and to a Roman Catholic priest, because there is nobody else who can give it."

Having come to this conclusion, Miss Drane consulted a friend in whom she had confidence, and the advice given her was to put herself into communication with some Anglican authority first, lest under the pressure of overwrought nerves she might take a fatal step from which there could be no return. In accordance with this advice she sought the aid of John Keble, and the result must be told in her own words.

"Keble, I think, was an unsatisfactory director. He was kind, amiable, and his own humble pious character made itself felt in his letters and personal intercourse. But he never laid hands on the soul, or even attempted it, and his directions were always in the way of 'suggestions.' The burning question of confession was at once brought forward, and Keble's direction was amusingly original if not theological. The way he 'suggested' of settling it was this: 'Write out your general confession and send it to me; then go to church and listen to the *general absolution* with great reverence; and that will do until you can make it in person. Meanwhile, keep a copy of your confession, and read it over on certain more solemn days, Fridays, or eves of the greater feasts!' A pleasant way of preparing for one's 'greater feasts,' and a nice sort of feeling that one's unhappy 'general' was always locked up in one's private desk ready for use! But I do not intend to be savage, and indeed I loved and reverenced Keble greatly, only I felt I had shot an arrow's length beyond the mark he aimed at; I do not mean in goodness, God forbid! but in apprehension of what the Catholic Sacraments really meant. For, in fact, to write out one's sins and post them, and then go to church and make-believe that the 'misereatur vestri' of the public service is your own private and particular absolution, was too transparent a sham for me to succeed in practising. I tried it, and was too much ashamed of the absurdity ever to try it again. With the profoundest respect for one so venerable as he undoubtedly was, I felt that I was asking for bread and he was giving me a stone.

"In my sick-room, where I remained for two months, I tried to build up some little shed in which to shelter myself, for one could not go on living among ruins. I had become conscious of my own profound ignorance of 'vital Christianity.' I read all manner of spiritual books, Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living,' Baxter's 'Saint's Rest,' Sherlock's 'Practical Christian,' and for the first time, oh! never-to-be-forgotten experience, St. Augustine's 'Confessions,' which, with its picture of a soul somewhat similarly shaken and shattered to pieces by an inward storm (sent how or whence, who can say?), went through me like a thousand arrows."

This was a period of severe family affliction as well as of personal trial for her own mind, for her father was dangerously ill with an attack of jaundice, her brother was prostrate with jungle-fever after returning from Ceylon, while every servant in the house was laid up with illness, and her mother left to nurse everybody. As soon as possible, therefore, Augusta left her sick-room to aid her mother, and the necessity of exertion was of benefit to her health, and distracted her from her mental trials. Still her state of health was the cause of much anxiety, and the doctors advised both exercise and change of air.

"So it was decreed that I was to go to London to my sister's, and until that could be effected, I was to ride. It was all one to me just then what they did with me; some years had passed since I had had a mount, and one February morning I found myself cantering along to see the hounds throw off, under the escort of two gentlemen, both mighty hunters, and one of them a Catholic.

"Any one who knows the peculiar overpowering sensation of a first expedition into open air after a month or two of the sick-room, may understand a little of my sensations that day, but not all, not really the hundredth part of them. I, the nature-worshipper, to whom a few weeks before the open air, and the glorious exercise, and the sight and sound of dogs and horses, and the budding hedges and freshly-turned fields would have been like an intoxicating draught of pleasure—I galloped through it all, looked about me, and felt that *it had died*. Yes, it had died—or I had. I was a ghost returning back to the world I had left, dead to all I had formerly cared for, and caring nothing if the horse pitched me over his head or not. Oh, but I did care though—for *I had got a soul*, and whether that soul was in the right place or the wrong, whether I *had got the truth*, whether there was really *any truth to get*—all these and other awful doubts kept knocking and torturing me, whilst I had to talk to my companion, and listen to his observations about 'your new vicar,' and 'your Church,' till really it would have been a relief to jump a five-bar gate and get rid of him !

"Then he thought fit to compliment me on my bold riding, whereas I was letting the dear old horse do precisely as he liked, and being a knowing horse, he managed a great deal better than I could have done ; and at last we were on the bit of open moory hill at Abbots Kerswell, and, while the gentlemen were busy with dogs and a lost scent, I distinctly remember drawing my rein, looking fixedly on the moor, and all those hills and valleys I have spoken of before, my old haunts, beautiful whether in summer or winter, and bidding them all farewell.

"I wondered why ! Was I going to leave them ? Had I left them ? What was gone ? What was it that had died ? My old self. At twenty-four nothing of the past remained. We got home, and I consoled my mother by telling her we had had a famous gallop, and it had done me a world of good. A few days later I left home and found myself in London.

"Happy is it that we cannot look before us, or tell what a day will bring forth! It was the February of 1848, the year of revolution. It was Lent; my sister was a good deal taken up with the children, then in the nursery, and I was much alone. It was a dullish part of London. I used to walk to the nearest church where there was Lenten service, twice a week, and how detestable it seemed! Anglicanism in the country, vamped up, if I may so say, with the rural sweetness of old grey towers and chiming bells, and pleasant walks through cornfields, etc., is quite a different thing from Anglicanism in a London Proprietary Chapel—all respectability and pew-openers, and a sort of whiskered pomposity about the attendant clergy difficult to digest. I had with me 'Avrillon's Lent' and the 'Paradise of the Christian Soul,' and I found it hard to use them in the presence of the particular clerical dispensation which it was my lot to attend. In fact, I was thirsting for Mass and the Sacraments. Moreover, I was still far from well, and I did not improve matters by the manner in which I kept that Lent—still I did my best to struggle out of the sickly faintheartedness which had crept over me, and I was at times surprised to find a kind of *mental* strength new to me. It was the first fruit of bitter suffering."

While she was still in London, another chapter of suffering began. Her beloved mother died suddenly, and the shock was a fearful agony that only those who have experienced it can understand. "The homeward journey I cannot bear to think of—nor the return to the roof, where I had so lately left her, sweet and beaming, as she always was. If there had been an illness, or anything to break the shock, it would have been more tolerable; but to see the rooms with her work and her half-finished letters, and then to go upstairs and see her beautiful face, more beautiful than ever in death, except that those dear eyes were closed, never to look at us again ! " She died on April 19, 1848.

It was in this time of intense grief that she became more intimate with Mr. Maskell, who was singularly kind and sympathetic with all the family in their desolation. Although at first determined to be reserved with him, he after a time began to appreciate more clearly Augusta's state of mind, and to discover that she was not content with Anglicanism. For a time she remained at home alone, and " though," she wrote, " I do not remember how long a time I was by myself, I do remember how I spent my time, and among other things, not being able to procure a crucifix, I began to carve one for myself and finished it. Something must be done with my life—and every day, strange as it seemed, incomprehensible then, but not now, I felt this new strength growing, a strength of will and reason. It was that vigorous aftergrowth which follows on the death, or, if you will, the mortification of the imagination, like the new growth of a tropical forest after a fire has burnt up the old."

There was a fervid energy flowing through her that demanded work, and there was nothing to do. Visiting among the poor she had always carried out, but this was not enough—she felt the need of more absorbing work. In after years she expressed in some lines, in " Songs in the Night," the state of her mind at this period :—

" My life was labour ; yet to me it seemed
Such work was best repose.

The Lost Flock.

" Even toil grows dear
To weary hearts that know not to be still,
And work to drive away the sense of ill."

The Flock Restored.

She founded a school in one of the hamlets belonging to the parish of S. Mary Church, and walked every day to it over Black Hill, through the Combes and along the green Barton lanes, which she loved so well. She undertook the religious instruction of the children herself, and "remembering my own experience of Church Catechism, I chose a good many supplementary methods. I took Ken's 'Practical Love of God,' bought a very large picture of the Crucifixion, and with that before us we used to go through every article of the Creed, for Ken's work is an explanation of the Creed. After that, the children learnt Devotions to the Five Wounds and similar things, which I am afraid were not taken out of the Book of Common Prayer, and all this was heartily supported and assisted by Mr. Maskell, and his curate, Mr. Domville." The latter gentleman afterwards became a naval chaplain and died at sea.

Through all this active parish work she became more intimate with Mr. Maskell, and at length he discovered all her trouble of mind on the subject of confession, and the result was that he objected to give her Communion until she had made her confession. On this she afterwards made the following remarks: "According to the Catholic view, he was clearly right. People who desire confession must be supposed to have something to confess, and if so, ought to make their conscience right before Communion. But quite as clearly he was wrong on Church of England principles. The Prayer-Book allows people to 'open their griefs,' but nowhere enjoins confession, or prohibits Communion without it."

The difficulty was solved by a visit of Dr. Pusey to Torquay, and she consented to go to confession to him. Of this she afterwards wrote, quite privately, words that she would now pardon being made public: "I shall not easily forget that time, and that day, April 8, 1849. I, certainly, am not one to make light of such an act, unsacramental though it be, invalid its absolution, unmethodical its preparation, and irregular its administration. In every one's life, who has decided on such an act, it is about as solemn and critical and momentous as any one can perform. To me it was the conclusion of a long struggle, and the realisation of exactly a ten years' desire. If a soul can give *any* pledge of sincerity, this is it. If ever a true act of contrition, of humiliation can be elicited from a soul, surely it is in this voluntary act, the fruit of an intense conviction. When it was over, I was as unsatisfied on the respective claims of Rome and England as before; I had as much and as little faith in the English Sacraments, but still there passed into my conscience a deeper peace, although the debatable ground of Faith remained unchanged."

She returned to her active work in school and parish with a more cheerful spirit, almost, but by no means quite, happy. It was not only the crucial question of the Catholic Church that was troubling her mind, but "several interior convictions and attractions and prophecies and beckonings and shadowy forms of misgiving about the future. I had had so much of my own interior laid bare to me and made comprehensible; that it was no wonder if, among other revelations, I came to understand the precise significance of a good deal which had often been a mystery. Why, in happier days, nay, in the happiest, had I always felt as though a black curtain hung over the future? Why had I shrunk so from the particular phantom I had nicknamed 'the world'? What was the meaning of that favourite theory of mine about the Superiority of Poverty?" She began to comprehend. Vocation was to a certain degree preceding conversion. She began to see that something besides becoming a Catholic lay before her, and that the one great change and separation, and death to domestic ties, would only be the forerunner of another more complete.

This kind of prevision of her future life is so curious that it must be related in her own words, written, it must be remembered, for an intimate friend, and without the slightest notion of its ever being published.

"Religious life," I thought to myself, "is not necessarily convent life. Perhaps what I am meant for is to lead a 'religious life' in the world. What is 'religious life'? The three vows, and with them separation from the aims and habits of the world, devotion to the poor, work for souls, and works of charity. I thought out all I had to think on paper, and sketched the 'Ideal of a Religious Order,' which should give a rule and a bond of union to persons working in the world, and unable to go into a convent. It was to have Constitutions (where did I get that word?), and superiors, and so on. It was to have works, and institutes of charity were to be aggregated to it; our little group of schools might be among them. I gave my sketch to Mr. Maskell, and asked him to read it, and tell me what he thought of it.

"Standing by a myrtle-tree, one day, in our garden, just going out, he said 'By-the-bye, I have read your sketch. Do you know, an order exists among Roman Catholics very like what you describe?'—'Indeed! I know nothing of it: what is it called?'—'The Third Order of S. Dominic,' he replied. As he said the words, I thought I should have fainted. I burst into a profuse perspiration, and laid hold of the myrtle-tree to prevent myself from falling. I went back into the house, and wrote down the name in my pocket-book, saying to myself, 'Some day I shall belong to the Third Order of S. Dominic.'"

In the course of 1849, besides her active work, and the sketch above described, she tried her hand at other kinds of literary work. She had at various times written for her own amusement different things; for instance, she had collected all she could find of the English Saints, chiefly out of Holinshed. She had composed a life of S. Dunstan, and had written a good deal about S.

Guthlac and Croyland. She had also written a large amount of poetry, and "at this time," she says, "I determined to look it all over, to destroy the rubbish and to take the best specimens I could find to perfect. I had a great conflagration, but ended by making a selection of sonnets, which I continued to work at, and polish, and cut about all that summer. The rest went to ashes.

"These sonnets were on many subjects, all religious. One on S. Francis (what did I know about him?), one on S. Charles Borromeo, one called 'Looking into the Font,' one on 'The Rainbow round about the Throne.' These are all I can remember, but there were a good many. I wanted to test their merit, and challenged the criticism of one or two friends. They gave their opinions pretty freely; and I really laboured on those sonnets as if my reputation depended on them, though I had no thought of ever publishing them. In fact, I had made a resolution never to print and never to publish."

What was the ultimate fate of those sonnets? Long years after this time of storm and trouble a friend asked her what had become of these little poems over which so much labour had been spent. She wrote in reply, "I quite forgot to tell you the end of the sonnets. The day before I started for Tiverton to be received into the Church, I considered within myself, first, that the clinging I had to that particular collection indicated that something of self was nestling in it; second, that writings which bore the stamp of my old Anglican self could not also bear a genuine Catholic stamp; third, that it cost flesh and blood something to sacrifice them, and therefore they had better be sacrificed. So I took a match and burnt them, and was glad of it, for I felt a cord had been snapped. I have never regretted the act, and I am perfectly sure if many converts would do the same they would do a good deed."

The Gorham case was going on at this time, and agitating many minds. When winter came, Mr. Maskell had advanced so far as to say he did not think it much mattered which way it went. He felt, with many others, that the fact of baptismal regeneration being called in question was quite enough. Miss Drane boldly added that she hoped it would "go wrong," as that would help to break the chains. After a visit to Exeter about Christmas-time, she returned home with a "deep conviction that a few months would end the whole affair, and that then it would be small concern to me what way the Privy Council might decide: I should be out of it all." While at Exeter she paid her last visit to the Cathedral. "Last times are always sad, and the dreamy thoughts of old days came back, and, as chance would have it, they sang once again, 'O that I had wings like a dove,' and I thought to myself that I was about to fly away indeed!—would it be to find my rest? I hoped so."

It is interesting to find that Miss Drane had become acquainted with Anthony Froude, who had before taken deacon's orders in the English Church, and, not feeling able to go further, had left Oxford. He was a German scholar, and had imbibed liberal notions in religious matters. Anthony was the youngest son of Archdeacon Froude, and brother of Newman's intimate friend R. Hurrell Froude, and the family orthodoxy being alarmed, first Newman, and then Mr. Coleridge of S. Mary Church were charged with the task of his recovery. At the time Miss Drane made his acquaintance, he had a little house at Babbacombe, where he studied and wrote, near his friend Coleridge, of whom he was very fond. "Occasionally," she wrote afterwards, "he preached and did duty. He never touched on doctrine, but his sermons were the most wonderful compositions I ever heard: Newmanish in style, but still quite original. We did not know him very intimately, and I think it was as well. Both my sister and I were much attracted to him, and I dare say he might have done us harm. At last he published his first book, and a copy of it came into my hands, 'Shadows of the Clouds.' It dispelled the charm. Before that he had preached Mr. Coleridge's funeral sermon, an exquisite composition, of which I had an unpublished copy. His views were not then publicly known, and the Bishop offered him the living if he would take full orders, and his friends implored him to accept, but he refused, and next year published his 'Nemesis of the Faith,' which caused a great commotion.

"My sister used playfully to draw a parallel between Anthony Froude and myself, and would say we resembled each other mentally. The resemblance, if any, was by contrast. His friends were holding him in the Establishment by ropes to keep him from infidelity; my friends were doing the same kind office for me to keep me back from the Catholic Church. But in one respect our positions were alike, and perhaps tended to similar results. We were sailing under false colours, living in a system we both interiorly despised, and felt unreal; and I know nothing that so saps the spirit of real faith and reverence. I dare say a year or two more of the life I was then leading would have carried me into what is called the Broad Church. I *think* it never could have carried me into infidelity, strictly so called. In younger days, indeed, I was much taken with Emerson's writings, until I came on a passage where he declares that the whole aim of his life shall be to get rid of the belief in a Personal God. But to disbelieve in a Personal God, and substitute belief in the 'Absolute,' the 'Oversoul,' and other things which the peculiar terminology of Pantheism puts for God, was always totally repugnant to my whole mind. Then, as now, I always felt there is one real article of Faith, GOD—all the rest is developed from that. Pantheism was therefore to me an impossibility, though the love of nature attracted me to some of its lingo.

"I felt the dreadful emptiness of Anglicanism as a moral, no less than as a dogmatic teacher. I almost felt it more. Keble's style of direction was so extremely 'washy,' and yet Keble was Keble. The only books that gave me any help were Pusey's adaptations from Roman books, and what an avowal of Anglican weakness was that! I was getting extremely weary of 'views'; I wanted something for my soul.

"One day, in Mr. Maskell's library, I stumbled on three volumes bound in dark green cloth, the title of which took my fancy—'Religious Perfection.' I carried them off. It was Rodriguez. A girl of sixteen reading the Waverley Novels for the first time would be a feeble comparison. Better was this than any conceivable novel, for here *at last* I found reality. It was precisely what I wanted, what I had always felt the want of; and I used to cry out, 'Oh, if I had only had this book at fifteen, what a different being I should have been!' Impossible not to be a glutton over these books. I read them by day; I read them by night; I read them aloud to my sister, who was vexed by my enthusiasm, and did not relish the Fathers of the Desert; and when she objected, I walked down to Petit Tor and read them there. I went right through them in a week, and then I began again, and went right through them a second time. If I ever hear deprecating remarks about Rodriguez, as if he were an old fogey, I feel as if I could slay any one who does not love him as I do! I think he saved my faith."

The reader must remember that all these sentences, charming as they are in their simple fervour, were not written for publication, but for the eye of a single intimate friend, who feels, however, that the writer would not now object to her allowing them to be published with the hope of helping other souls.

Meanwhile the Gorham case dragged itself along like a wounded snake. One day, in conversation with Mr. Maskell, she was chafing exceedingly at the horrid state of Gunpowder Plot secrecy in which so many had to look after the affairs of their souls. Her father's morbid hatred of all connected with confession, Puseyism, and sacerdotalism in general, made it necessary that all her little intercourse with Keble and Pusey should be veiled in secrecy She was by no means the only person similarly situated, and she felt deeply the bad effect it might have.

An intense love of truth, and of straightforward sincerity of word and deed, had grown with her from childhood. This love of truth was far too genuine ever to allow her to make any profession of caring for it more than others, a common and singularly odious form of self-praise, often producing in the minds of those who listen, the idea that deceit is going to be practised.

But the absence of plain teaching in the High Church party, the uncertain voice of the trumpet blown by the authorised teachers of the Establishment, brought home to her the lack of the sure foundation of truth. She was expressing herself plainly one day upon these points to Mr. Maskell, when he replied, "That is strong; now just put all that down on paper—put it as strongly as you can; I will print it." She went home and wrote "The Morality of Tractarianism,"[1] a pamphlet of thirty-three pages. It was printed just after Mr. Maskell's "Second Letter on the Position of the High Church Party," and the two publications made some commotion.

This pamphlet, long out of print, is the first of Miss Drane's works. It is vigorously written, and the words evidently flow hot from the heart ; but to those familiar with the writings of her more mature years, there are naturally many traces of the fervid eloquence of the young writer. In it she denounces vehemently the underhand expedients to which those were reduced who desired freedom to act according to their consciences, and she concludes by saying, " Only let all feel the coming struggle to be for the sanctity of truth. We ask to be suffered to believe, and teach, and live an honest life. We ask to be freed from enforced deceptions ; to be at liberty to make our children Catholics, without thereby, of necessity, teaching them to lie cleverly. We ask for words which our hearts may utter with our mouths ; we ask, as the weapons of controversy, only the arrows of truth. ' Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them ; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gates.' "

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[1] "The Morality of Tractarianism: a Letter from one of the People to one of the Clergy." William Pickering: London, 1850.

And when, the long struggle from the " city of confusion " into the city of God being at last over, she found her feet on the Rock, she rejoiced with exceeding great joy in the peaceful possession of the truth. Her love of Holy Mother Church as the infallible and consistent teacher of all revealed truth increased with every year of her life. She felt that God taught her through and by the Church. At a much later period she wrote, during a period of trial, the following words, found in one of her private manuscripts :—" O truth ! truth ! is it a dream ? No, it is God. God is truth. And we are true in proportion as we are in Him, and false in proportion as we live, love, plan, suffer, and rejoice out of Him. The single eye is the eye that looks to Him, and is therefore true. But out of Him, apart from Him, the world is indeed false, and human nature is a lying delusion ; and therefore the spirit of the world is to cheat, and to pretend, and to flatter, and to betray. From the spirit of the world deliver us, O Lord, and give us the simple heart, the single eye, the pure intention, the direct aim, that we may walk undefiled in the way, and be numbered among the immaculate in heart ! "

Just then Newman was delivering his lectures on the " Difficulties of Anglicanism," in London. He quoted from both these pamphlets, and both Mr. Maskell and Miss Drane rejoiced to have helped on the movement, and to have done what they could to enable others to follow their consciences freely and openly.

In the early part of 1850, Miss Drane felt that she could no longer reconcile it to her conscience to go to the Communion in the Anglican Church, and she acquainted her father with her determination to withdraw from it. To her surprise, he took it very calmly, expressed his regret at her decision, but said that she must do what she felt right in the matter.

At this time Mr. Maskell left S. Mary Church for London, and not long after was received into the Catholic Church, and Miss Drane decided that she must take the same step. But it was impossible to accomplish this without a last mental struggle ; and as many may have to experience the same, the account shall be given in her own graphic words.

" A short period of temptation came upon me. It is one thing to think, another to act ; and whenever I do act, I am open to a special temptation, namely, that of seeing just then, as if for the first time, all that may be said on the other side. I had spent a longish time utterly discontented with the Church of England, but when the hour struck for leaving her, I saw how intensely I loved—not her, but the superficial charm which clings to her ; the rural parochial ties, country life, the having a parish church with a grey tower, the English Bible, the sound of the afternoon church-bell, the poor people, some of whom clung to ' Miss Augusta.' In fact, the Combes and Barton had grown to be my own district. I knew every cottage, and every soul in every cottage ; the children knew me ; the old people knew me, and between the old people and me there was a strong tie. My sister and I had spent much of our time among the people, and of them, I am so glad to think that many have since lived and died Catholics.

" My school was another tie. It was flourishing, full of children, well taught, and getting to be very promising 'Anglo-Catholic,' strongly flavoured with Rome. Besides, every one knows what a great charm to flesh and blood there is in anything that is *one's own*, the fruit of one's own idea and labour. Self-love has a great deal to do with this—not all bad, but all natural. So day after day my Barton walks brought home to me the fact that there was more to sacrifice than I had thought of. I knew well enough that there would be an end of visiting the poor people and the rest; and *the rest* was taking root in me. I perceived how it was: all these occupations were getting moss-grown and picturesque; that dreadful 'beautiful' was getting up again, and once more would have to be cut down with a sabrestroke.

" So I resolved on doing what would compel me to do more, and to burn my ships, so as to cut off the possibility of retreat. One Sunday evening, after dinner, I told my father, face to face, all about it, and my fixed intention of becoming a Catholic. Of course he was terribly distressed. But bad as it was, it was an immense relief to me. I had pulled the string of the shower-bath, and now there was no recall.

" My father went to London, and one day Mr. Maskell, who had resigned his living, and was at the Vicarage arranging his departure, came down to our house and told me that Mr. Fanning, the Catholic Priest of Tiverton, was in Torquay, and I was to go to him forthwith. I was exactly in the mood when a word of command settles one's fate, and I went. It was settled that I was to go to Tiverton on Tuesday in the next week.

" Then I paid my last visit to the Barton school, and felt that one dies many deaths before the end. The children sang, 'There's a nice little clock,' and 'The Swallow,' two infant-school songs always associated in my mind with that particular spring and summer.

"As I write all this, the events of those last days revive in my mind with singular vividness, and I like to recall them. Monday came, July 1, and I departed. Full of my own thoughts, I yet remarked that at every station people stood about and talked in an earnest, terrified way. 'Is it true? Has anything certain been heard? Are there any hopes of his recovery?' And so on.

"I reached Tiverton. The Priest occupied part of a large house built for a convent. That evening, and all the next day, he devoted to my instruction, and in the evening Miss Moore (a friend who was also to be received) arrived.

"Next morning, July 3, we heard Mass. Then came Confession, conditional Baptism (what an ecstasy it was to feel the water on one's head, and to be *sure*!), and our profession of faith at the Altar.

"We left the church, just observing that some people were at the bottom, assisting at the ceremony, and were met in the hall by Mrs. Fogarty, the old Irish housekeeper and her husband John, both bearing large bouquets of white roses, which they begged us to accept and wear, 'for it was the day of our baptism.' What a pretty thought it was! I kept one of my white roses as a relic.

"How happy I was!—so happy that I could not understand myself. I was not in the least pious, and did not want to say my prayers, but to go into the garden and tell the air and the sky and the fields how happy I was. Mr. Fanning perfectly understood me, and instead of prescribing piety, desired us both to eat strawberries, and I obeyed. I think I ate a good many. I also wished to take a sketch of the house and the church, and sat among the strawberry beds and drew them. The garden was divided from a field by a loose railing, and as I was drawing, two sheep came and put their heads through to look at us. I drew them, and added a third in the distance. When I showed this sketch to my sister, she took a pen and wrote over the distant sheep her initials, L. D., as though to avow that she was not yet of the fold, and knew it.[1]

"In the afternoon I returned home. The interior peace of that railway journey—deep peace, I shall never forget! It seemed to go into my very bones, and made itself sensible even to the body. It was not excitement, nor joy, nor high spirits, but peace. I felt I could say nothing, think nothing, but 'I am a Catholic.'

"I felt so detached too, so careless of what the future might bring forth—life or death—all was one now.

"I observed, as before, a great stir and commotion at every station, and everyone who came into the carriage was talking of *him*. 'So he is gone! so sad! so sudden!' etc. At last I found out who and what it was. Sir Robert Peel, thrown from his horse on Monday, had died on Tuesday, and the event was causing a feeling of consternation throughout England."

So the great step in life had been taken, and she had become a child of the Holy Catholic Church, the one true Church of God. All her doubts and questionings as to where and what is truth were laid at rest for ever; she came forth from the uncertain twilight into the full light of the Faith.

Years afterwards, in the pages of a private note-book which she had not destroyed before her death, she described as follows the state of her mind as an Anglican: "I find it difficult to measure precisely what were the real habits and sentiments of my soul under Anglican influence. I am disposed at the moment to depreciate them in a tone of exaggeration, but one is not quite fair in comparing them with the interior state of one's soul after it had been flooded by Catholic light. A more true appreciation is to regard it as one of the stages of growth. Still, in the main, I adhere to my view. Religion in that stage was more theory than practice, and my inner life belonged more to the Beautiful than to the True. As I regard and understand the whole case now (1876), I should say that up to my twenty-second year I lived in and for the Beautiful, almost exclusively. It had to be hewn down with axes and hammers, and when it was, or seemed to be, ruined, I felt reason and will expand. I was able for the first time to lay a grasp on Truth, intellectually and morally; and when once Truth, that is Faith, had secured its power over me, lo! the Beautiful reappeared—not the old Beauty of nature, but a new species, in which nature was but the veil, and the transparent veil, of grace. Beauty lies hid wrapt up in truth, as a nut within its shell; and as the breaking and crushing of a shell is necessary to extract the kernel, so there is breaking and crushing also needed before the real inner Beauty can be set free in the soul."

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[1] This sister afterwards became a Catholic, and died before Mother Francis Raphael.

This was no doubt the idea that suggested the exquisite little poems, called "The Lost Flock," and "The Flock Restored," and "Loss and Gain," in "Songs in the Night."

There is only space for a few lines from "Loss and Gain," which are quoted with the hope that it will make the reader anxious to study the rest if he is not familiar with it. After recalling many delightful remembrances of beauty and tender affection, she concludes thus:—

"Thou hast lost what the world holds dear;
Ah, well for thee that it died!
Fold it up and put it aside,
And weep for it never a tear.

O empty heart ! O weary breast !
Never below shalt thou make thy nest.
    It must not be ;
The human home, the earthly rest,
    Is not for thee !

But oh ! what hast thou won ?
A love that is ever pure,
A love that shall aye endure
When the sands of life are run :
Then, mourner from the dust arise !
Thine are no fragile, earth-born ties
    Which part and sever,
But Love Divine, which never dies,
    Is thine, for ever ! "

IV. LIFE AS A RELIGIOUS

Vocation to Religious Life

The singular presentiment that Miss Drane had felt about her future life, when she wrote in her pocket-book, "Some day I shall belong to the Third Order of S. Dominic," has already been related. Immediately after her reception into the Catholic Church she asked Mr. Fanning to tell her some particulars about the Third Order of S. Dominic, but he referred her to Bishop Hendren, by whom, in a few days, she was to be confirmed. This had been arranged to take place on July 12, and accordingly that day found her at Clifton, where the Bishop resided.

After she had received Confirmation, she asked him to inform her about the Third Order of S. Dominic.

"You had better go over to the convent," he answered, "and ask them there." The result must be given in the words in which she often related the incident.

"To the convent I went, not knowing it was Dominican. I rang, and the door was opened by a novice in spectacles. She took me into the parlour, and we began to talk. Presently I brought out my question; 'I suppose you know that we are the Third Order of S. Dominic,' she replied. I felt overwhelmed; it was like meeting one's fate."

The novice, the first member of the Order she had ever seen, was Sister Mary Imelda Poole, afterwards her own Novice Mistress, and later the Mother Provincial, and throughout her life the dearest friend of her heart.

Her early Catholic life at home had its troubles of course, but she loved afterwards, in conversation with familiar friends, to forget these, and to dwell upon the sweet memory of the brighter features of that time, when she "first learnt to appreciate the Mass and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, those first days when the smell of incense and the sight of a lighted altar were new sensations, full of rapture and redolent of faith." She loved to recall walks to Tor Abbey, through a lime-tree avenue, now fallen before the builder, and her happy work in the school. She used to congratulate herself—and this will be a useful hint to many converts—that the only Catholic books which were at that time at her command were those of an old-fashioned library, "which," she used to say, "I read right through, beginning at the top shelf and going on to the bottom. Hay, Gother, Challoner, S. Alphonsus Liguori, a few Saints' lives (S. Teresa was the first), then Alban Butler, and other books of the old school. It got into me a good deal of solid instruction, and sobered me, taking the Puseyism out of me. Still I am conscious," she used to add, with genuine humility, so different from the idea of some converts, that they know everything already, "I am conscious that it has been very slowly and gradually that my mind has expanded to Catholic light. And I have been constantly amazed at the discovery of how profound was my ignorance of the real Christian verities."

In the autumn of 1851, Miss Drane, with four other ladies, one of whom remained her intimate friend and companion in religion for life, visited Rome. Her thoughts as she left the English shore she described long afterwards to her friend. "There was one of those parables of nature which I have sometimes thought of throwing into verse. When steaming away from Newhaven, we watched the white cliffs disappear; then came for a while the open Channel, no shore visible; then early morning, and gradually coming out of the mist the coast of France. Now, as I am growing old, I think those white cliffs are like my younger days, fading away from sight; then comes middle age, out in the shoreless ocean, steaming away one knows not whither, till, as the years pass on, there comes a new light on the horizon, the dawn of another day, and we see in the dim distance another and unknown land awaiting us."

She has left in a private journal some characteristic remarks about the journey, and the impression that the Eternal City made upon her mind, and the new ideas, artistic, intellectual and spiritual, that took root in her soul. The first visit to Rome is an event in any one's life, an education in itself; but the event is now so common and that only a few remarks shall be here recorded.

In speaking of the first sight of the deep violet waters of the Mediterranean, she used to say, "It made me comprehend what was meant by the classical term, 'the wine-dark sea.'"

The ladies spent eight months in Rome, in rooms at the top of the Palazetto Borghese, arriving there in October. On All Souls' Day Miss Drane heard for the first time the music of the Pope's choir. "My first impression," she noted down, "was more than disappointment. It reminded me of the painful sensation I had gone through when for the *first* time listening to an Oratorio of Mendelssohn in Exeter Hall. Yet this only meant that my ear had to be educated. Each time I heard those singular tones I liked them better, and soon grew to feel their power."

Speaking of figured music in the churches, she remarks: "The truth is that the figured music of Italian churches, when not too extravagant, suits the way in which those churches are used. On the great Festa of a Saint, when the Sanctuary is thrown open all day long with its subterranean crypt or some other holy spot, and crowds are going in and out all day to visit the place, saying a prayer and leaving again, the long elaborate vespers, and the sweet sounds coming down out of some lofty hidden tribune, and floating about anyhow, are just what you want, and they suit the place as well as the time. Transfer the same music to the benched, contracted space of a little English church, where the congregation come to hear Mass in a business-like way, and there are no holy places to visit, no relics to venerate, and the suitability is gone. Anyhow, I found the music and the churches in harmony with one another.

"At first, like other at firsts, I could not reconcile myself to Italian architecture. I missed what to my then feelings was the necessary charm of an ecclesiastical building—the mystic solemnity, the lights and shades of a Gothic cathedral. Gradually my taste enlarged, and I got to forgive the bad taste of minor accessories, and to admit the devotional character of churches like the Gesù and the Sta. Maria del Popolo. I grew to like the warmth of colour and the mute language of pictures, so that on returning to Pugin churches in England I felt them cold. It was new to me to regard pictures as aids to devotion, but I soon became satisfied they are so, far beyond what statuary can ever be. The first acquaintance with frescoes, even Raphael's and Domenichino's, was again a disappointment, but here, as before, the eye soon learnt to be educated, and I comprehended at last that the fresco colouring is the only one which really represents *air*.

"I confess all my sources of delight in Rome were not of the spiritual order. I loved to top on our way from the Gesù, in the market-place outside the Pantheon, and see the queer things people displayed for sale; amongst them, tortoises, wild boars, fungi, and some odd rodent animals, neither hares nor rabbits—frogs also, and occasionally lizards. I liked to look over the prints spread out on the steps of the churches, of the saints, and their miracles. I liked to see the flocks of turkeys and herds of goats perambulating the streets, and to see the goats picketed outside the steps of the Minerva, the goatherd having gone in to hear Mass. When quite sure I was safe from their horns, I liked to look at the beautiful grey oxen drawing carts, their eyes as soft as deers' eyes, and the buffaloes lying outside Sta. Maria in Cosmedin. I liked to watch the green lizards playing among the creepers on the walls. There used to be many of them near S. Sabina ; and I dearly loved the clear fountains, ever flowing, ever murmuring out of their graceful, classic, groups of Tritons and Sea-gods. Also I loved to get somewhere whence one could see, not Rome only, but the mountains far away, and between them and us the Campagna and its aqueducts. All these pictures photographed themselves on my mind, and are as fresh and living there as if I had only seen them yesterday."

It was during this visit to Rome that it became clear to her mind that her vocation was to enter a religious Order. For some time she was unable to find a confessor who seemed to understand her needs, and to whose direction she felt her soul attracted ; but on one Sunday afternoon she suddenly encountered, as if by chance, the man destined to guide and enlighten her.

' Going, as was our wont, to the Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi," she writes, " I beheld ascending the pulpit steps a Dominican Father, whose aspect at once attracted me. His head was bent down ; his eyes were sunk in his head, as if they had retreated into caves ; his countenance seemed transparent. He was not a good preacher at all, but I felt he was something better than a preacher. It was Père Besson. The idea at once suggested itself that I should go to confession to him. The notion seemed absurd. He lived at the other end of Rome, was Prior of the Convent of S. Sabina, and hard at work at his paintings at S. Sisto."

In spite of these difficulties, however, an appointment was made for Père Besson to meet her at the Chapel of the Convent of the Trinità dei Monti.

"I always remember that day with wonder. I did not understand myself. Père Besson said very little, except to encourage me to speak out all that was in my soul; and when I had done, he began, and taking every one of my words, he unwound them as if he had been unwinding a tangled skein of silk. If he had known my whole life and the interior of it, he could not have comprehended me better, and he made me comprehend myself. The light he gave me during that hour has remained a light till now, and often greatly helped me both to comprehend my own troubles and those of others.

"He admitted, with the peculiar simplicity that was so striking in him, that in certain cases he did read consciences, and he thought he had read mine, and so that I had better keep to him, and begin by making a retreat at the Trinità, and he would see what he could do to help me.

"I was present at the Mass he said in the Chapel of the 'Mater Admirabilis,' and feel convinced he was in ecstasy. I think he must have stopped a good half-hour at the Elevation, and his face, as I saw it sideways, was as one entranced. I was told he often said Mass there, that he might be in private."

The account of her retreat at the Trinità, and of its result, is related in a letter she wrote at the time of her half-jubilee to Bishop Ullathorne, which will be inserted later. The retreat passed in a storm of reluctance and resistance to the call which she felt to enter religion; and on the last night, she rushed to the Chapel of the "Mater Admirabilis," which was in the convent of the Trinità, where she was staying. There (she told her friend in confidence) Our Lady made her presence so sensibly felt that the storm was entirely calmed, and repugnance gave way to peace and joy. This was on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. She left a ring she much valued to be set in the crown of the "Mater Admirabilis," as a token of gratitude. Madame Cesarie said, when she heard of this, "It is well known that Our Lady does speak to souls in that Chapel."

Mother Margaret Hallahan, the Foundress of the Congregation of S. Catherine of Siena, had established her first convent at Clifton, close by the cathedral, and before going to Rome Miss Drane had been received, with a friend who was also a recent convert, into the Third Order of S. Dominic, as a secular Tertiary living in the world. This was on the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1850.

On her return to England from Rome, in 1852, she determined at once to carry out the decision she had arrived at during her retreat, and accordingly she applied to Mother Margaret to receive her into the convent as a postulant. In September of that year, therefore, after taking part in a retreat given in the Clifton convent, she and the intimate friend who had been with her in Rome were admitted into the convent, became postulants on October 4, the Feast of S. Francis of Assisi, and were clothed in the habit of religion on December 7 of the same year.

It was at this time, in the fresh beginning of her convent life, that the foundations were laid of that lifelong friendship with Mother Imelda Poole, which was one of the special graces, as well as the greatest joys of her life. Mother Imelda, in fact, though a young religious was Novice Mistress, and she it was who guided and supported Miss Drane (henceforth known as Sister Francis Raphael) in the first difficulties of religious life.

Her sympathy and tenderness, together with the sagacious way in which she understood the character of the new postulant, helped her through all trials. For one so devoted to country life and pursuits, with an imagination so vivid and intellect so active, the restraint and monotony of convent routine, especially at Clifton, where there was only a very small garden, surrounded by buildings, was undoubtedly a most trying change. Once she confessed to Mother Margaret that she felt it keenly, and longed for some change and excitement, "even a rat hunt." Mother Margaret was highly amused, and with a beaming smile replied, "A rat hunt! Well, if that is your taste, Longton [where there was then a convent] will be the very place for you. The cellars are full of rats!"

When Mother Margaret next visited the Longton convent she remembered this, and wrote, "I have not forgotten you and your rats: there are plenty here waiting till you are professed; but I hope by that time you will have learnt to hunt souls, and will have found the pleasure of catching them for our Divine Master."

"Mother Margaret," writes one of the Sisters at Stone, "was the last person in the world to allow any one to wrap her talent in a napkin: every gift possessed by any of her children had to be utilised to the utmost for the glory of God and the good of souls; and the word 'impossible' was utterly banished from the convent vocabulary. Aware of the versatile powers of her new daughter, she began vigorously to turn them to account. Every interval left free from religious exercises, Community duties, domestic work, and teaching in the orphanage, was spent in such varied occupations as painting altars, manufacturing figures for the Christmas Crib, translating the hymns of the Breviary into English verse, or assisting Sister Imelda in the compilation of the Constitutions."

In the course of the summer of 1853, all the novices, with Sister Mary Imelda Poole as mistress, were transferred to the new, and as yet unfinished, convent of Stone, in Staffordshire, which from that time has been the Motherhouse of the whole Congregation. Those who have only become acquainted with it in its present finished state, with its spacious church, with the schools, hospital, and other works complete, can hardly picture to themselves the half-finished building which received the novices in 1853. An amusing letter, written by Sister Francis Raphael to one of the Community at Clifton, accompanied in the original by some clever pen-and-ink sketches, will give an idea of the incipient state of everything in those early days.

"For ourselves," she writes, "we are content at present with a charcoal sketch of regular observance, reserving its filling up for the blessed future, when we shall have rooms to live in, gas to see by, a bell to call us, and all the men turned out by the shoulders. At present we punctually attend noviceship instructions in the dormitory or the garden. You would like to see the little birds hopping round us, as if we were stocks or stones. Whether they don't understand the habit, or think that those clothed in it are free from the universal sin of Adam, I know not, but they are wonderfully bold. Reports come from the great school of the winning ways and innocent faces of the children. The school stands among the trees. [Here follows a sketch.] The middle school opened yesterday, under the direction of S.M.G., who has been engaged with her pupils ever since. [Here follows another sketch, exhibiting S.M.G. sitting opposite some empty benches.] Our refectory is at an alarming distance from the kitchen, and the dishes have to travel through the cloister, which is in the process of building, so we have prepared our minds for a seasoning of chips and mortar." [Another sketch.]

In 1856, his Lordship the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Ullathorne, who from the beginning watched over all the interests of the community with fatherly care, undertook the duty of giving the annual retreat himself. A most striking one it was—original, like everything he said or did; searching, and likely to produce a lasting impression on a mind such as that of Sister

Francis Raphael. It was a distinct epoch in her spiritual history, and the effect of the words of the holy and learned Bishop was never effaced. He dwelt much on the personal love of our Blessed Lord for each individual soul, and represented Him under the various Gospel similitudes that impress this truth, as the Man seeking pearls, the Merchant, the Good Shepherd, and others. This truth of the personal love of God for her own soul came home to Sister Francis Raphael with intense vividness, as if she had never before realized it. The result was a period of spiritual fervour and sensible sweetness that for the time quite overpowered her. "When in my cell alone, I lay prostrate on the floor in a sort of ecstasy. I could not sleep for three nights, but lay broad awake, thinking, 'He loves me! He loves *me myself* with a personal love!' I could hardly touch food. There was a complete revolution in my spiritual life, and the solid grace lasted when the sensible devotion was withdrawn. But I learnt then how far safer it is to walk habitually in the paths of faith than in the joys of sensible devotion."

This idea she has expressed in the poem called "Sensible Sweetness" in "Songs in the Night," and she often tried to bring home the same teaching to her spiritual daughters, who might either be passing, in moments of desolation, through the "desert and pathless land, where no water is," or were rejoicing in the bright sunshine of sensible consolation.

It would be too long to quote the whole, but the last stanza of that little poem runs thus:—

"The joy is over, and the rapture fled—
Rise, then, to labour with heroic will.
Thou hast beheld those royal waters fill
Each channel of a life once dry and dead,
And o'er its barren wastes new freshness shed.
Count not the days too rapid or too few:
They passed away that we our part might do.

Then forward, gallant heart, nor weakly dread
The weary task renewed, the noonday sun,
Cold winter, or sharp frost, or chilling wind :
Cast coward fears away, nor look behind,
For now, we know Him we awhile believed,[1]
And, certain of the treasure once received,
We dare not shrink from work in His dear love begun."

In December the year of novitiate ended, and Sister Francis Raphael was allowed, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, to pronounce her vows before the altar of the temporary choir, now the Community room. She chose for her motto the words, "Domine non sum dignus," and for her mystery the Immaculate Conception, so that her full religious name was Sister Francis Raphael of the Immaculate Conception. Three others were professed at the same time, one of them being Sister Philomena Berkeley, who only lived till 1860, and was revered by the whole Community for her sanctity.

Twenty-four years later, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their clothing, Bishop Ullathorne wrote to the three surviving Sisters to congratulate them on the half-jubilee of their religious life, and Sister Francis Raphael answered with the following letter :—

"I have truly cause to call myself a child of the Immaculate Conception, and that in more ways than one. It was in the year 1849 that, being then a Protestant, some one calling at our house, said that on the previous Sunday a sermon had been preached in one of the Torquay churches on the Immaculate Conception. It was the first time to my knowledge that I had ever heard the words. Possibly I might have seen pictures so named in old galleries, but without attaching any kind of sense to the expression. But when I heard it, without the least idea what it meant, it seemed to be the most exquisite music, and a curious sort of sensation came over me, which I can only describe as the being brought into the presence of something ineffably *white*. I asked what was meant by the Immaculate Conception, and was told (what so many Protestants think it means) that our Lady's birth was miraculous, as our Lord's was.

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[1] Tim. i. 12.

"I said, 'I am sure it is not that, though I don't know what it is; but whatever it is, it is true,' and thereupon I went up to Mr. Maskell (he had preached the sermon), and begged for an explanation. Then I heard the doctrine explained for the first time. It was entirely a new idea to me but I felt an intense faith in it, and that instantly, without any pause or waiting to think about it. It was like a great flood of light on the Incarnation. I believe that act of faith was the impulse that made me a Catholic.

"The year after I was received I went to Rome, where I made a retreat, in the course of which my Confessor decided that I ought to enter religion. All my life, not merely as a Catholic, but even as a Protestant this idea had been familiar to me; but directly it was decided, such a storm began in my soul as I could not describe, and it seemed to me as if I had never really loved the world till I distinctly understood that I was to leave it. I believe it was a sort of interior revelation that my real world was natural affections, tastes, and habits, and that the sacrifice of these would be a kind of death. However, I can only remember spending hours every day in the large empty Church of the Trinità, literally watering its pavement with my tears. But one day, the day before the retreat ended, the storm suddenly stopped, and was succeeded by a profound peace; and that day was the Eve of the Immaculate Conception, on which day next year I was clothed, and the twenty-fith anniversary of which I have just been keeping. Truly, I can repeat your Lordship's words, and look on what I was and what I am, and feel lost in thanksgiving!

"How then could I take any other mystery than the Immaculate Conception? I remember dear Mother Margaret being surprised at my choice, and saying she expected I should have taken a sorrowful mystery. But it seemed to me then as now, that all good things have come to me through this special mystery of an Immaculate Mother."

While three of the newly professed were taken at once out of the novitiate, Sister Francis Raphael was left to help the Novice Mistress, Mother Imelda, and had thus opportunities of becoming more intimately acquainted with her than before. In a memoir written after the death of this beloved mother in 1881, she says: "Mother Margaret always felt that Mother Imelda perfectly comprehended me, and sanctioned my regarding her as my real mother and used to give me up entirely into her hands. She, on her part, gave me her entire confidence, and it would be utterly impossible for me to put into words what I owe—I will not say so much to her direction, as to the influence of always beholding unveiled (as far as it ever did or could unveil itself) her most pure, just, and beautiful soul . . . . We began from this time to work together, and in one way or another, sometimes less closely and sometimes more so, we continued to work together for twenty-eight years with our respective natural dispositions almost opposites. One so calm, so rarely—I may say *so impossible*—to move in the direction of anger, so wholly under the influence of reason, and such a stranger to impulse; the other with totally opposite tendencies. Some of the results which followed were amusing enough. For instance, one day a novice had been guilty of some little delinquency, which had roused the indignation of both of us, and I went to Mother Imelda to state my case, and to represent the necessity of the fault being noticed. 'I know, I know,' she said; 'I am going to speak about it; but I can't feel angry enough just yet.'—'You can't feel angry enough!' I replied in surprise: 'what do you mean, and what are you going to do to get angry?'—'I shall make my meditation about it this evening,' was her reply, 'and then I shall be able to speak.'—'Well, this is extraordinary!' I exclaimed; 'you have to say your prayers to be angry, and I have to say mine to keep my temper!'"

This story indicates clearly the difference of character between these two souls that were associated closely for so many years. Each acted on the other, and in external government, the one was the complement of the other. Mother Imelda Poole, of whom Bishop Ullathorne wrote, at the time of her death, that he had never in all his experience met a soul more perfect in holiness, was the chief instrument in God's hands in forming the religious character of Sister Francis Raphael. She completely understood her from the beginning, and while realising to the full all her sterling qualities, she at the same time comprehended and made allowance for the difficulties that the regularity and monotony of convent life presented to one of such naturally impulsive temperament. Mother Margaret, though full of admiration for her gifts of mind, and wishing to afford her every opportunity and encouragement to employ them, did not so thoroughly comprehend the humility and self-distrust which underlay a character that seemed so strong and masterful on the surface, and therefore in her fear lest any intellectual pride might be indulged, she used to mortify and try Sister Francis Raphael in many ways. Mother Imelda Poole understood her real mind more thoroughly, and therefore, though perfectly frank and straightforward in pointing out her failings, she was able, by sympathy in thought and feeling, to steer her safely through all difficulties.

Another admirable religious, a pillar of the community in those early days, was a future Prioress of Stone, Mother Agnes Philip Moore, who, like the Novice Mistress, Sister Mary Philomena Berkeley, was quickly ripe for heaven. She died in 1872, but during the absence of Mother Margaret and Mother Imelda in Rome in 1858, she was the Superior left in charge; and during that time Mother Francis Raphael was closely associated with her, and they became very intimate. Writing of her after her death, while all were lamenting her loss, Mother Francis Raphael thus describes her :—

"She was, of all the souls I ever knew, the most conscientious and the most self-diffident. She truly and unaffectedly believed herself to be so unamiable and deficient in everything good, that she could not imagine it was possible for any one to like her ; and I believe it was the pains I constantly took to make her know that I did love her very much, which inspired her with a gratitude which drew us together ; and yet we all loved and reverenced her, and before her death I do believe she knew it, and that it made her happy. Dr. Newman, her old friend and director, hearing of her illness, wrote a letter full of sympathy with us, and remembrance of her. 'I cannot grieve for her,' he wrote : 'she is going to the reward of her long service, to our dear Lord and His Blessed Mother ; she is going to the company of those great Saints, whose traditions and whose work she has done her part with such loyal fidelity to uphold and continue in this her day.'

"Ah, what a loss she was ! How for months after she was gone, I used to listen for that firm, gentle step in the cloister, as regular as the tick of a watch, which, I used to tell her in my saucy way, chanted the words prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance."

During these early years, Sister Francis Raphael not being in any official position, and therefore not being occupied by any regular and definite duties, it came to pass that she was often required to fill the various domestic offices, and she was always delighted to be useful in any way, however, humble or menial the work might be. She relates herself, that once when she was wanted by a visitor of some importance, she was engaged in the scullery; and when some surprise was expressed that one so gifted should be so employed, Mother Margaret replied, "Why, you don't suppose I would have had her for her books, if she wouldn't peel potatoes?" However, at one time (she tells the story against herself in "Mother Margaret's Life,") she was changed week after week from one employment to another, till her patience became somewhat tried, and she more than once found herself giving way to the thought that she was being made nothing but a *stopgap*. Going one morning into Mother Margaret's room, she was saluted with the words, "Well, Sister Stopgap, what a good thing it is to have some stopgaps in the house!" and she was obliged to acknowledge how exactly the Superior had read her thoughts.

When in 1858 Mother Margaret visited Rome, she spoke very enthusiastically to the Dominican Fathers of San Clemente of the young religious who she hoped would do so much for the Order by her pen. "But how about humility—how about obedience?" asked Father Mullooly. "She is the most docile in the house," replied Mother Margaret.

The reason that one so capable was not intrusted with any definite work was to allow more time for those literary occupations for which she was so singularly adapted. Interruptions, when engaged in study and writing, are peculiarly aggravating to the natural spirit, and to be made constantly a stopgap under these circumstances must have been trying in the extreme. The sacrifice of her own will must have been continual. "It is probable," writes a Sister, "that few persons would have been able to write a book at all under such difficult circumstances; but Sister Francis Raphael possessed a rare power of concentration, which enabled her to finish more literary work in odd minutes between community duties than most people would be able to accomplish in many consecutive hours of leisure. The speed with which she wrote was extraordinary. A great part of her translation of Père Chocarne's 'Life of Lacordaire' was done while sitting with the children of the school during their evening study, and they would watch her pen as it flew over the paper and declare that was like an express train."

The first work she published after entering religion was a tribute of love to the founder of the Order to which she belonged; and though she used afterwards to point out many defects in this book, it is written in a popular and interesting style, and must have brought some knowledge of the holy Patriarch to many who would have remained without it absolutely ignorant of his life and virtues.

At this same period she also published anonymously a book called "The Three Chancellors," being a short account of Wykeham, Waynflete, and Sir Thomas More; and later a short history of "The Knights of S. John," written in a graphic and spirited style. The Sister above quoted writes of this work that "an officer in the army having his attention called to this book by his sister, was so much struck with the soldierly appreciation and vividness of detail with which the military engagements are described, that at first he denied the possibility of its being written by a nun. When convinced, he exclaimed: 'Well, tell her she has missed her vocation: she ought to have been a soldier!'"

The writer of this memoir once met an officer of distinction in the Royal Navy, and the conversation turning upon Malta, "Have you ever come across," asked the captain, "a capital book called 'The Knights of Malta,' a most interesting work? I have lent it now to a brother officer to read, but I do not know who wrote it." He was astonished to find that the authoress was a nun, and was much struck by her photograph. The two anecdotes that follow illustrate the remarkable power of concentration she possessed.

"On two different occasions," she once wrote to a friend, "a curious phenomenon has happened to me, which, purely in the intellectual order, has helped me to understand certain spiritual phenomena in the lives of the saints. I can only call it mental ecstasy.

"The first occasion was when I read for the first time Nichol's 'Architecture of the Heavens.' Until then I knew nothing of astronomy beyond the solar system, for in my childhood nothing beyond this was taught. When I got out of the solar system into the galaxies, and beyond our own galaxy, on the verge of other galaxies, the new idea so riveted my attention, that this happened—my soul's consciousness followed the attention of my mind, and was as if out of the body. When some one knocked at the door, I was conscious that my body was in the room, but my soul was out of it among the galaxies. I literally had to wait, and push my soul, that is, I suppose, the attention of my soul, into my body again by successive efforts, before I could move a limb or open the door.

"The other occasion happened in the Convent, and was a curious example of the effect of concentrated attention. During the holidays, I used always, when engaged in the school, to assign myself a task of reading. One summer I chose Möhler's 'Life of S. Athanasius,' which has a preliminary and most masterly summary of all the doctrine in connection with the Incarnation. I went to my cell after dinner at 1 p.m., and read, as I thought, till 2.30, when the bell rang, as I again thought for afternoon tea and recreation. I put away my book and went down, first to the Community room—no one there. I saw it was later than I thought by the light, and looked into the choir—no one there. I then went to the refectory, and there was the Community just finishing supper: it was 6.30. I had read for five hours without drawing breath, and thought it only one, riveted, swallowed up, not exactly in the new idea, but the marvellously new developments of that idea, and I think nothing ever left such a lasting effect behind it, of anything I ever read, as did that five hours' séance. I had never before fully grasped the idea of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity creating the world: 'By Him were all things made, and without Him was nothing made that was made.'

"All the beauty I had so much loved and worshipped, the beauty of sunrise and sunset, of leaf and flower, of form and colour; the beauty of the heavens, of the sea, of the woods—all had come out of the Mind of the Eternal Word. 'That which was made in Him was Life.' It was an ecstasy in very deed."

While engaged in the school, she wrote her "Introduction to English History," which was followed later by "A History of England for Family Use and the Upper Classes of Schools," giving the history from a Catholic standpoint in a popular manner, suited to the comprehension of young scholars. This work answered the demand for a work that should be accurate from a historical point of view, and yet free from the prejudice of the ordinary histories against the Church and everything Catholic.

While deeply engaged in these literary works, her own soul was being tried in a way little suspected by those even who knew her best. Far from any temptation to vanity in these external occupations, she was suffering from depression arising from a sense of uselessness, as if she were unfit for any work, and therefore set to write books. "I wish," she wrote to an intimate friend, "I could contrive to be of some use to somebody, but I seem past the time when we can go in for utility in this world. I spend my time in writing books."

Just at this time also all the spiritual consolation she had before experienced in the thought of the personal love of our Lord for her own soul disappeared, and she had to undergo a period of intense inward trial and darkness. She had to walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, and the suffering was acute. Bishop Ullathorne afterwards explained it by saying that she was then experiencing what spiritual writers call the "purification of the spirit." "It might have been that," she said, "or anything else, but the suffering was terrible. I can only explain by saying that it seemed as if 'God were dead.' I seemed to myself an idiot, without understanding. I was not an idiot, for I was teaching in the school, and wrote more then than at any other time; but even when writing and studying, I was unconscious of mental process of any sort. The absolute misery and abandonment were beyond words. It did not seem to me that I prayed, and what the time of prayer was in horror, I could never explain. At last I took to saying the rosary, not with any feeling of devotion, but to secure that I did something." [1]

During this time of inward suffering she found much assistance from Father Austin Maltus, a Dominican, who for twenty years was chaplain at Stone, and at the end of a daily exercise in mental prayer, drawn out for herself from Hilton's "Scale of Perfection," she has inserted a number of spiritual maxims afforded by his direction.

Light and peace returned at last, and, as often happens, suddenly and in an unlooked-for manner. She thus describes it: "During the autumn of that year (1866), the Bishop wished me to undertake a literary work of some importance, and spoke to Mother Margaret about it. I explained my difficulties, but she urged me to try. One day I found a note in my cell to this effect:

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[1] Readers of S. Teresa's Life will remember words similar to these in which the Saint describes the period of desolation and of the "passive purgation."

'I hope you will try; it is an important work; to help you, penance is required; that will get you the Spirit of God.' As I read the words, something fell away from me—what, I cannot say, but my soul was drowned in sweetness, far beyond that first visit of our Lord. [During the retreat described before.] It was perfectly unspeakable, and remained for a long time. None of my outward relations changed, but I did not seem to mind."

An intimate friend recalls an incident belonging to this period which illustrates Sister Francis Raphael's character, and shows that she was not so useless to others as she was tempted to imagine. She received a letter from a lady who had recently become a Catholic, and having in an impulsive manner taken vows while living at home, asked advice as to the best method of keeping them. She was personally unknown to Sister Francis Raphael herself, but knew her sister Louisa slightly. The letter was answered, but the advice contained not being relished, the correspondence soon ceased. The next thing heard of this lady was the afflicting intelligence that she "had given up everything good, had disappeared, and none of her own family knew what had become of her." Sister Francis Raphael, in distress, consulted Mother Margaret, who replied in her usual decided way: "You must not let go of her, you must try and save her." With considerable trouble the lady was traced, the debts which had been her ruin paid, and not long after she married respectably, though rather beneath her position. About a year later, very early one morning, before she had risen, Sister Francis Raphael felt a sudden and vivid impression on her mind that this lady was present in the room, and she seemed to hear the words, "Except you and your sister, there is no one to pray for me." During Mass that morning she prayed earnestly for this lady, thinking she might have fallen into some new trouble. Later that same morning a letter came from her sister containing, to her surprise, the very words she had seemed to hear some hours before: "Poor M. is dead; and, except you and me, there is no one to pray for her." She felt deeply affected, and to the end of her life never forgot this poor soul, but prayed for her continually.

"To my mind," writes an intimate friend, "one of Sister Francis Raphael's special characteristics was the quick intuition with which she discerned every attractive quality in all with whom she came in contact. As an instance of this, there was an old Sister of very simple character whom we all loved and venerated, but who often tormented us in choir by the perfectly audible way in which she said her private prayers. Being deaf, she was quite unconscious that her fervour thus distracted others. During her last illness our Mother (Francis Raphael) related the following anecdote without seeing how it revealed her own character. "I happened to be kneeling out of my place in choir, and heard a Sister behind me praying out loud most fervently, but I could only hear the sound without distinguishing the words. Quite unable to attend to what I was doing, I resolved to unite my intention with the person to whom I was listening, and at once felt a flood of devotion I could not describe. By-and-by I glanced behind, and found that my neighbour was old Sister Mary Anthony."

Speaking of the same simple and holy soul, Mother Francis Raphael said, "Once as I was going to Holy Communion, happening to raise my eyes, I saw a Sister returning from the altar rail, whom I did not recognise. The face was of marvellous beauty, giving out a sort of light. There was something altogether supernatural about it; I could only describe it as the countenance of a person altogether lost to self, and wrapt in the sense of God. 'Who can it be?' I said to myself. 'Can it be S. Catherine?' I approached as closely as I could to examine, and then I perceived it was Sister Mary

Anthony, completely carried out of herself and in an ecstasy of love. I can only say that such beauty as I then gazed on I never saw before or since. It was the beauty of ecstasy."

When Sister Mary Philomena Berkeley died in 1860, the care of the novices was entrusted to Sister Francis Raphael, and she held that important office for three years, and those who were under her charge look back with gratitude to the solid instructions she gave them on the principles of religious life, to the influence of her strong character upon them, and the bright recreations, during which she often poured forth anecdote and incident in great variety, about the saints of the Order, and its legends and traditions. Some of these can be found related in a book called "Catholic Legends," published by Burns, and chiefly written by her.

But in 1863 it was felt that the duties of a large novitiate left her no opportunity for literary work, and she was therefore relieved of the burden and made Mistress of Studies, which gave her more leisure for writing.

During the next nine years, therefore, she laboured much with her pen, besides teaching in the boarding school. It was at this time that she produced the work called "Christian Schools and Scholars," a book that required much reading and research, and that which of all her productions would appeal to the largest number of general readers. It is an admirable history of the various Christian schools from the earliest times, and though written in a popular style, displays an amount of learning which is extraordinary under her circumstances.

"This book," writes one of the Sisters at Stone, "would never have been written if it had not been for the encouragement of Mother Imelda Poole, to whom she chanced one day to describe the scheme of an historical review of education, of which she had conceived the idea many years before, but the execution of which seemed, to use her own words, 'as impossible as if I had proposed building the Tower of Babel.' But by Mother Imelda's management and continual stimulus, as well as her personal help in translating from the Latin, it was made possible, and the result is a brilliant and most interesting sketch of Christian education, from the earliest times down to the Council of Trent."

It was at this time also that many of the poems published in the volume called "Songs in the Night" were composed, though without any idea of publication. They were written as the result of her own meditations, and were only collected and given to the world by the command of Bishop Ullathorne, who rightly judged that thoughts so beautifully expressed would find an echo in many hearts. No one can read them without feeling that had Mother Francis Raphael given herself up to the cultivation of poetry as her profession, she could easily have stood high among the first poets of the century. Poetry was by no means the occupation of her busy life, but undoubtedly the ring of genuine poetical genius can be recognised in the verses she composed, as a refreshment from graver duties. She was delighted to be assured by letters from many she did not personally know, that the poems had been of distinct benefit; and she used to say, "It is the only book of mine that I know for certain has done good to others, because they have told me so."

She wrote a song for the English-speaking Pontifical Zouaves. It is called *Anima Mia*, a "Zouave's Song." In sending Mother Imelda a copy, she wrote, "I could refuse the Zouaves nothing, so, when I was asked by one of them to write a song, I felt obliged to comply: so here is the song. It was written to an exquisite air, fished up from the deep waters of S. M. Dorothea's exhaustless memory, with some trumpet notes in the chorus, which make you feel you could go straightway and kill some one, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. I hope you will cry a little when you hear it sung. The words of the chorus you perceive, are a translation of Julian Watts Russell's motto, *Anima mia*, etc. :—

> 'Love God, O my soul, love Him only,
> And then with light heart go thy way.'"

The reader will remember that Sister Francis Raphael had become familiar, in very early years, with the old English Saints, by constant study of the old black-letter copy of Holinshed's "Chronicles," that she considered one of the greatest treasures of her father's library. She always felt enthusiasm for them, "those dear old men," as she lovingly called them. She wrote a sketch of twelve of them, from Venerable Bede to S. Richard of Chichester, in blank verse. It was never published.

The following incident is from the verses about S. Walstan :—

> "And can I fail to think and speak of thee,
> Thou homely lover of the rustic life ?
> Good Walstan, who didst lay aside thy rank,
> And hide thee in the peasant's garb and work.
> I knew thee not, till thou upon a time
> Didst choose to make thy name and story known.
> I mind the day, when evermore there came
> Into my mind, and on my lips, the prayer—
> 'S. Walstan pray for me—S. Walstan pray !' [1]
> And when I took my book to pray, indeed,
> Within the leaves (I knew not whence it came,
> And none could say whose hand had put it there),
> A picture met my eye.—It was a field,
> An English harvest-field—where knelt in prayer—
> His scythe and reaping-hook beside him laid—
> One with a kindly, simple, Saxon face,
> Staying his work to pray amongst the corn.

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[1] I had gone on being quite bothered with these words ; and when I saw the picture I almost fainted : no one could tell me anything about it.

In the Menology, published by Father Stanton, S. Walstan is described as giving up a rich inheritance to become a farm-servant

The tower of a rural village church,
A cart, and two rough oxen by its side;
And underneath, his name—and that was all.
Well, 'twas enough, and soon I learnt the rest,
How well he loved his simple rural days
Among the corn-fields of his Norfolk home,
Hard work, fresh air, the stillness of the fields,
The quiet communing alone with God:
This was his life—there was not much to learn—
Save that he left a name that never died.
Great Saints have been forgotten in the land,
But Walstan's humble story still survives;
His well still yields its cures to simple faith,
His name is borne by curly-headed boys,
Who play about the village where he died,
And every one in *Babur* knows the tale
Of the good Walstan's oxen and his cart.
Nay, it is painted on the church's walls:
So pilgrims come to drink beside the well,
Which to the villagers is holy still;
And any child will point you out the way
The oxen took, down the green fields, and there,
Across the stream; and here, they say, there stood
The chapel o'er his grave, where every year
The mowers and the husbandmen were wont
To come, and pay their vows at harvest-time,
Till ruthless Henry came and took it down."

When writing "Christian Schools and Scholars," she met many of her old friends in the English Saints connected with the history of education. She wrote about this time:—

"I feel so glad my old men will have the ægis of the Order thrown over them. Dear old things! I hadn't opened them for ever so long, and when I did yesterday,

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at Costessey. He died in the field, and his remains were carried with great veneration to his native place near Norwich, Bawbury or Babur. He died 1016, May 30th. The oxen, unguided, took the sacred remains to Babur.

their sweet faces seemed to look out of the pages, and give each a kind smile, and say 'There we are! we don't forget you.'"

They did not forget her. She used to have little tokens of sympathy. In the closing lines of the bead-roll above referred to she writes :—

> "And so farewell, ye grand and noble names,
> Names to my childhood, strangely, sweetly dear.
> E'en now I see the huge worm-eaten book,
> Oak-bound, black-lettered, iron-bound, and grim,
> Which taught me first that England once had Saints
> Of other fashion than the herd of men.
> Perchance they gained me faith—perchance they drew
> My wandering footsteps to the Church's fold;
> Howe'er it be, as life flows on, I hear
> Their kindly voices ever at my side,
> I feel them watch me with their earnest eyes,
> And something warns me when the day draws near
> That gave an English Saint to Paradise.
> For love has mysteries, and Saints are friends:
> They haunt our paths, and watch us as we pray.
> Read not their stories as of dead men gone,
> For what if one were standing by thy chair!"

"When," writes an intimate friend, "she was employed on their lives, she almost invariably found that the close of her work fell on the day they had left this world for heaven. This had happened so often that, when writing about S. Boniface, she came to the end of her work three days before June 5, the day of his martyrdom, she was half inclined to leave the last words for that day. But feeling this would not be quite honest, she finished at once, and when writing the last words, 'St. Boniface was martyred on Whitsun Eve,' she suddenly remembered that she was herself writing on Whitsun Eve."

S. Richard of Chichester was one of her special favourites, and towards the end of her life she had collected a considerable mass of materials for writing his history, but was interrupted by her last illness. One of her spiritual daughters at Stone has used this material and given us a Life of S. Richard in remembrance of Mother Francis Raphael.[1]

The portrait of Mother Francis Raphael would not be life-like without some mention of her sense of humour, which made the recreation so pleasant when she was in the house. It bubbled over into rhyme as easily as the fountain sends out spray, and even letters about dry business affairs often ended with an amusing anecdote. For instance, at the close of one, she added—

"Timothy (the cat) overcame himself to-day. He always goes to see the fish unpacked, and knows the fish day like an almanac. To-day he was left alone with the fish, and instead of walking off with one, was found sitting with his back to the temptation, turning away his eyes from the iniquity. He was rewarded with a tail."

We give the two following poems as examples of Mother Francis Raphael's gift of writing bright and amusing verse. The first was written for the Feast of St. Nicholas, when it was the custom, in the early days of the Congregation, to address a poetical petition for some small present, generally of a domestic character, to the Very Rev. Dr. Northcote, their "Temporal Father."

AN ODE TO PAN.

December 1869.

Seven shillings for a Pickling Pan !
'Tis cheap enough no doubt :
And were the money in my purse,
I'd gladly take it out.
In dreams by night a vision bright
Of pots and pans I see :
I wake with a groan for visions flown—
There is no Pan for me !

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[1] "St. Richard, Bishop of Chichester," published by Sands & Co., Edinburgh.

In ancient days, as Virgil says,
When Romans saved their bacon,
They gave, each man, a pig to Pan,
His favours to awaken.
No Pan have I to give my pig—
Ah me ! I'd write a canto,
If those who wish the gentile dish
Would help to get a Pan, too !

St. Nicholas drysalter was,
Unless my mem'ry's fickle.
But his was a tub—aye, there's the rub—
I want a PAN, for pickle !
Oh ! would he but some mortal move,
'Twere worthy of a lyric ;
And in my Pan-try I would hang
The donor's Pan-egyric !

No pickled pork can knife and fork
Of patients ever see here ;
And yet the Pan, for faces wan,
Would prove a Pan-acea !
Will prose, or rhyme, or Pan-tomime,
Or sounds from Pan-pipes stealing,
The Oscott echoes best awake,
Or move their Master's feeling ?

Seven silv'ry reeds composed those pipes ;
And, to a *reading* man,
'Tis wondrous to observe the fact,
Seven shillings will buy the Pan !
Oh ! let me to the tinman hie ;
He is a good mechanic—
And through the house the news will fly
As swiftly as a Pan-ic.

" God save our noble Queen ! "—*I* cry
" God save our temporal Father ! "—
In democratic days like these
We prize our Fathers rather !

With Pan-sies we will wreathe his brow,
So learned and so clever ;
On wings of fame we'll spread his name,
And salt it down for ever !

In January 1891, Mother Francis Raphael was writing the " Life of Saint Dominic," and used to read anything striking to the Sisters during the evening recreation. The following little poem was written for the feast-day of the Prioress, whose name was Paula :—

S. PAULA.

Canto I

Within a cave there lived of old
A Saint, and eke a Lion
Or pictures tell us so, at least,
If them you can rely on.

He was a very learned man,
And wrote books big and solemn,
And all the world respected much
Jerome, the Church's column.

And in another cave hard by
A Saintess too resided ;
So for the profit of them both
Good angels had provided.

From Hebrew into Latin he
The Bible whole translated,
Whilst at the portal of his cave,
Paula for proof sheets waited.

Although she wrote no books herself,
She did what was much better,
She egged on Jerome when he flagged,
And strange to say—he let her.

Unto her Sisters every night
She read each fresh-writ chapter,
And as she conned the holy words,
In ecstasy they rapt her.

But sometimes Jerome weary grew,
The pen dropped from his fingers ;
Then Paula to herself would say—
" Somehow that writing lingers."

Then in her head so sweet she'd pop,
" Dear father, if it please you,
We've stopped at chapter so-and-so—
I hardly like to tease you.

" And just this moment, as I see
Your dear old head you're resting—
But oh ! Ezechiel's cars we find
So *very* interesting."

Then up he'd spring from rocky couch,
No naughty names he'd call her ;
For he, so stern to all beside,
Was like a lamb with Paula.

His eyes he'd rub to get awake
(For perhaps he had been " winking ") ;
" All right, my child, just mend my pen,
I've only been a-thinking."

And so Ezechiel finished got,
And all the Minor Prophets ;
And still to urge him on to work,
Was Paula's gracious office.

Oh, happy times ; oh, blessed Saints !
How much the world has owed them !
May men who dawdle ever find
A woman near to goad them !

CANTO II.

My story is not ended yet,
For history gets repeated ;
I hardly like to tell the rest,
Lest it should sound conceited.

But here to Stoke a second time
I come with pens and paper.
(When it's all done with, won't I cut
A grand Provincial caper !)

And day by day I peg away
At this eternal scribble,
And oft I grumble, growl, and groan,
And end of goose-quill nibble.

Then opes the door, and in there trips
Our smiling Mother Paula,
No word impatient dare I speak,
For fear I should appal her.

She looks so pleasant and so bright,
My savage mood I smother :
" Some reading we should like to-night,
If you're quite free, dear Mother ! "

What can I say ? She looks so sweet
My heart is not impervious,
I give her my most gracious smile,
And say, " I'm at your service."

Full well I know I am no saint,
Yet at a humble distance
Sinners may follow in their track
And crave the Saints' assistance.

And though no Jerome sure am I,
I've got, good luck befall her !
The thing that Jerome valued most—
I've got—a Mother Paula.

In 1869, when every effort was being made to build a hospital as a memorial of Mother Margaret, Sister Francis Raphael and a companion were sent over to Ireland to obtain subscriptions. Mrs. Scully received them into her house in Dublin, "with a kind of hospitality one does not know how to describe," writes Sister Francis Raphael. "We should feel scruples in making such free use of other people's house, servants, and time, were it not that Mrs. Scully's sentiments of delight and happiness are too genuine to be mistaken. N. expresses it by saying her mother lies awake all night blessing God for granting her so wonderful a favour, and thinking what good she could ever have done to have merited it. We signally failed as beggars," she wrote, "and from circumstances could not begin the most distant attempt at begging, but we saw every imaginable institution of charity, and made many friends, and got an Irish Committee formed to collect subscriptions for the hospital.

"We have seen a sort of almshouse, or God's House, as it would have been called in England, for old maids, the chaplain of which is ninety, and reputed to be a living saint. He sleeps, and has slept all his life, on a plank, and does all sorts of austerities. In spite of his age, he had said two Masses and given benediction that day, and heard all the confessions. I never saw such a meek, mortified, venerable face. You would think it was S. Alphonsus. He came almost bent double into the parlour to see us and give us his blessing. He is Father Henry Young. There are all sorts of stories about him." The deep impression Father Young made on her she describes in "The New Utopia."

"S. Vincent's Hospital for convalescents occupies what was, before the Union, the Earl of Meath's grand mansion. It was lovely to see hospital wards in magnificent suites of rooms—the former ball-room converted into a chapel, and, like everything else belonging to this particular institute, a chapel thoroughly devotional and well cared for.

"The institutions of the Irish Sisters of Charity are exactly what we want, and the Sisters themselves a glorious body of women. They have at S. Vincent's a bust of their foundress, Mrs. Aikenhead, the massive shape of the head, the chin, and mouth so like Mother Margaret's—in short, the head of a foundress, and their spirit, like hers, so free and large, and at the same time so interior. We were both delighted, only in a dozen letters I could not tell all we saw.

"Yesterday, S. Dominic's day, was also delightful. The High Mass sung by Franciscans, and the oration by Father Burke—a real oration, and a magnificent one too—the immense church crowded: side aisles, with hundreds of poor, all standing, with their faces turned up to the preacher. At the moment when he described our Holy Father's death, they gave a little murmur of applause, and down at the bottom of the church, where they were more at their ease, they were indulging in little comments, such as 'It's him that can do it then'—'Isn't he a darling?'—'That's it, my honey,' and the like. He is a great favourite, and no wonder. He is certainly the greatest orator I ever heard, not excepting Père Lavigne. I ought to say after his hour and a half preaching, he came to wish us a happy feast.

"Tallaght was delicious—the Dominican novitiate on the borders of the mountains, the old ruined palace hall turned into a church, and a big walnut tree in the garden planted in the seventh century by the Saints of Tallaght.

"Dear old Father Russell, O.P., conducted us everywhere, and took the entire charge of us, and we were extremely well taken care of in every respect.

"We paid a charming visit to the Dominicans of Blackrock, the simplest creatures out of Paradise. How they welcomed us ; how hospitably they entertained us ; how we were driven about the grounds in a donkey-cart ; how the birds came and settled on the head of one Sister ; what good nuns they are, and how everything about them testified the real religious spirit ; and the heartfelt sympathy they expressed for their sisters at Stone will form the subject for many talks at recreation."

A friendship between the then Novice Mistress at Blackrock, Mother Gabriel Gill (now Provincial of the Dominican nuns of Dunedin, New Zealand), was then formed, which lasted to the end of Mother Francis Raphael's life, and in affectionate rememberance has survived it.

The travellers returned home as poor as they went, as far as means to build the hospital went, but rich in associations and kindly relations, which never afterwards died out. One of these was with the Very Rev. Father Russell, S.J., who remained to the last a kind and faithful friend.

"We say to one another," she wrote, on leaving Ireland, "how delightful it will be to meet all these good people in heaven, where we shall be able to enjoy them ! "

"When Mother Margaret died, in 1868," writes a member of the Community, "it was like the fall of a giant oak in a forest, and a sort of silence fell on all hearts, as though everything must come to an end." After the funeral, at which all the Sisters that could possibly come from the other houses assisted, Bishop Ullathorne announced that, till the will of the General was known, he appointed Mother Imelda Poole Vicaress Provincial of the Congregation. The bare announcement of this fact had a somewhat chilling effect on hearts that had been so sorely tried. This the fatherly heart of the Bishop felt instinctively, and a letter written by Sister Francis Raphael to the other houses describes the result :—

"My Very Dear Sisters,—I have a very long letter to write to tell you all that has passed since you were here yesterday, which I am sure will find the same response in all your hearts that it has in ours. . . . . You know what the Bishop said to us yesterday. Many of us were most anxious to say in our turn that there was but *one* to whom we could look for the future, and to implore him to let the General know the unanimous feeling of the Community, but we did not know if it would be proper or respectful. However, I believe we all prayed something might bring it about. This morning's Communion, the first since our Mother's interment, seemed so solemn; and after Mass, just as we were leaving the choir, the Bishop came to the rails, and beckoning Mother Imelda, said he wished once more to speak to the professed Sisters in Chapter. His words, as well as I can recollect, were as follows :—

" 'This morning, when I said Mass for our dear venerable Mother Prioress, I did not only pray for her soul, but I offered it to God in hearty thanks for all the graces and favours He had ever given to that holy soul; and during my thanksgiving I said the *Te Deum* and *Laudate Dominum* for the same intention. You cannot do better than thank God for all she was through grace. But there is one thing more which God has put into my heart to say—the provisional arrangement for the future I announced to you yesterday. I think you ought to give her, on whom the authority over the Congregation now rests, the same *allegiance*,' and then he paused, ' the same ALLEGIANCE which you gave to her who is gone, and whom she now represents. You need a rallying-point at this moment, and you will find it in her.' Then he paused again : ' I will say more, because God has put it into my heart to say it : I think our Lord will not be angry with me for saying it, for after all His servants are only His servants, are only *holy* because they are like Him.—Well, when He left His Apostles, He said, " I will come again." My dear Sisters, He did not come again: not in body—He came in His Spirit, and His Spirit governs the Church. Your venerable Mother is gone from you, but *she will come again.* She will come to you in her, in whom she has put her spirit, a double portion of her spirit. That Sister has been the depositary these many years of all her thoughts, her plans, her secrets—her spirit. She has contributed more than any to aid her in her work. She has been the completion of her mind, her instrument in drawing up the Constitutions, in perfecting the discipline of the Congregation—in everything. I will say more. That Sister has habitually concealed herself behind her Superior, she has made herself her shadow, her second self—her foot, her eye, her hand. I do not wish to influence your choice in any future election, when the time for election comes. But I do say, so long as by appointment of God she rules you, as she does now rule you, in the place of your departed Mother, give her your *allegiance.* And now I will only add to you, and to her, what I say to all new Superiors when I invest them with authority—God help you! God strengthen you!' Then he rose and walked out. I need not tell you how we were all crying. Mother Imelda turned to the Crucifix, and tried to say the *Adjutorium nostrum*, etc., intending us all to walk out too, but Mother-Assistant, by the inspiration of her good angel, went up to her and embraced her, and in a moment we were all round her. I think it nearly killed her, but it could not be helped. She was obliged to sit down in the Bishop's chair, because she could not stand, and we all came and gave her our *allegiance*, that is to say we gave her our hearts, and she took us all to her heart, as our Mother. I tell you it nearly killed her, and it nearly killed us, but it was the right thing; we wanted the vent. As soon as we were out of the Chapter-room, all the elder Sisters went to thank the Bishop for exactly expressing our hearts, and acting by one impulse, similar small deputations have been waiting on him to pour out their hearts and their gratitude."

It was at this time that Mother Francis Raphael composed the poem called " Josue " in " Songs of the Night," in order to comfort Mother Imelda in having to take the place of Mother Margaret, the Moses of the Congregation. Two stanzas are as follows :—

" I will be with thee still :
For think not, dream not that My gifts require
The force of human strength, the heart of fire,
The arm of flesh, the dauntless, iron will.

Far oftener they belong
To those who all their strength in weakness find.
Then lift thy heart, nor cast one glance behind,
But hear the gracious words, ' Be strong, be strong.' "[1]

The angel, who said " Be strong " to Josue, is supposed to be S. Michael, who was Mother Imelda's patron. Sister Francis Raphael read the little poem to her on the first day she had moved into the Provincial's room, formerly occupied by Mother Margaret. She wept with emotion, and when Sister Francis Raphael tried to comfort her, by reminding her that the Bishop had used the same words, and bid her " Be strong," she looked up, smiling through her tears, and said, " I hope he won't expect me to kill any Amalekites ! "

[1] Jos. i. 6-9.

V. MOTHER FRANCIS RAPHAEL, PRIORESS OF STONE

1872–1881

When Mother Agnes Philip Moore died in April 1872, Mother Francis Raphael succeeded her as Prioress of the Convent at Stone. The knowledge her humility gave her of her defects of character made the first announcement of this appointment a surprise and a trial. "It seemed to me," she wrote, in a little manuscript memoir of Mother Imelda, "such a woeful and miserable prospect, that I begged hard for a reconsideration of the subject, but to no effect. Nothing that Mother Imelda, with all her tenderness, could say, succeeded in encouraging me, and I passed through a period of unmixed misery. On the 5th of May, however, the appointment was proclaimed in chapter, and that evening I began my retreat before taking office. I have kept one of the letters Mother Imelda wrote to me during that retreat, so sweet and tender, yet so plain-spoken withal, not to say severe—sweet and tender as she welcomed me as her fellow-worker—plain-spoken almost to severity, in pointing out my defects. As to the first, she said, 'I trust with the blessing of God you will work with me as I did with Mother Margaret, and that you may carry the work on after me, as I did after her. The happiness this thought gives me, and the comfort it is in my sorrow for Mother Margaret's loss, you can scarcely understand, until you come to know by experience how completely a work such as this absorbs the whole being, so that you get to look on yourself and others almost entirely in reference to it.' Then she went on to point out all my defects, internal as well as external. She exaggerated nothing, but dissimulated nothing, giving me a sort of photograph of my outer and inner man, to the justice of which it was impossible for self-love to blind itself. Finally, she let me know that her only fear with regard to our mutual relations was, that as I was impulsive, and she could not contend, I might, to use her own expression, pull the boat round, when her own judgment would have preferred its not being pulled round."

Five years later, when all fears about the appointment had been dispelled, and all hopes more than realised, when she was wishing her a happy feast on S. Pius' day, Mother Francis Raphael rallied Mother Imelda a little on the fright she had been in five years before, and in the course of the day Mother Imelda wrote her the following note :—

"My very dear Sister, and true Yoke-fellow,—You reminded me of the misgivings with which I first laid the burden of authority upon you, and for the minute my attention was so fixed on the past, that there was not time to express all the joy and gratitude of my heart for all you have been to me during these five years. Not one of the misgivings has been verified, and more, far more than I could venture to hope has been realised. All hearts have been won, and the whole Community appreciates all that you are to each one ; while to me—what shall I say ?—you are at once my pillow and my staff. How good God is to grant us, even in this world, such a great blessing as a perfect union of two hearts in Him !—Your devoted and grateful Mother,

S. M. Imelda."

This little note, ticketed "My greatest treasure," was kept in Mother Francis Raphael's desk all her after-life, and when, on her dying bed, she was sorting her papers, she took it out, yellow with age, and kissed it, saying, "Put it carefully into Mother Imelda's memoir ; it is my greatest treasure."

When first placed in office, Mother Francis Raphael wrote a letter to Dr. Ullathorne, accusing herself of impatience and hastiness of judgment and action in her dealings with others, which made her in her own estimation utterly unfit for government. He wrote her in reply a letter containing a solid instruction on the virtue of patience :—

" The enemy of that grand central habit of interior patience is *haste* : haste of thought, haste of judgment, haste of manner, haste of speech. Nature moves first, grace proceeds with tranquil deliberation. It runs not before light, but walks deliberately after it. It moves not on quick impulse, but waits on intention. This is what Father Faber discovered when he said that perfection consists in walking slowly. It is the exterior habit of serene deliberateness. When we try for a few hours this internal discipline of patience, and move slowly, walking after light, we discover the hurry of our nature, and how that hurry is losing us our perfection. Hurry is impulse, not reason, and it baffles the work of grace. I have been often struck by the calm, slow, deliberate, immovable bearing of the picked men of the great religious orders in Rome. Nothing moves their serene, steady, and almost naturalised patience and serenity. The result is a very collected and equable bearing. It is the *forma gregis factus ex animo* (being made a pattern of the flock from the heart) of S. Peter (1 Peter v. 3). No doubt before that was gained, a vigilant watch over exterior control was exerted, and worked towards the interior, as the interior worked out towards the exterior. No doubt at all but that checks given to the exterior are really interior acts, and checks of a vivid nature, given by one interior power to another, grace itself being the moving power. And then do even natural powers of every kind become true strength, when they work submissively and harmoniously under the direction of Divine light and the movement of Divine grace, and this disciplined subjection at every point under the dominion of Christ our Lord, ruling us by

His Grace, makes the soul the serene organ of the Holy Spirit, for the animating, controlling, and guiding of our souls.

"True self-discipline is uniform subjection throughout the soul and the nature, in patience, and humility, and love, to the Divine dominion, harmonising the whole exterior and interior to the accords of the Holy Spirit; submitting our haste to His measure of time; our self-judgment to His judgment; our self-will to His inspirations; the notes of our voice to His sweetness; the movements of our frame to His attraction in the heart. Then religious life is a measure of Divine music, so sweet and melodious, that small discords and defects in the measure of time become great and intolerable, even to our own sense.

"What comes of this harmony with the movements of the Holy Ghost is freedom from nature, and with freedom a beautiful simplicity; and this simplicity, which, in our Blessed Lord, and the Blessed Virgin, and in the great Saints, made the forces of nature so calm, equable, and peaceful, wins all hearts to the charity of God."

This self-discipline of patience was the work of Mother Francis Raphael's life, and that the battle was won before her death, none of those who watched around her bed of suffering in her last illness would doubt. But the victory was not gained suddenly and without contest. It was the labour of a lifetime, and the natural impetuosity of her character rendered it difficult for her at first to bear with others. This was the occasion to her of many acts of humility, which were doubtless most pleasing in the sight of God. As time passed on and her experience as a Superior grew more wide, she learnt the power of patient forbearance and tender sympathy, and all who gave her their confidence found that she took the warmest interest in everything, however small, that affected their happiness and well-being.

After she became Prioress and had to govern others, she began to fear lest her own soul might be the loser by not being reproved and corrected for her own defects. She therefore tried to persuade one of her own subjects to point out her external faults, of which she declared, "I know I have swarms." To overcome the natural reluctance of the Sister, she said, "Do let us have a pure intention to please God, and help one another to please Him better." As it was not, however, considered prudent by Mother Imelda that this humble desire should be gratified, she wrote again to the same Sister, "You will make up for the loss to me by prayer, will you not, that I may correct my faults ? God can supply one means by another, and I would not go against obedience for any amount of penance."

She often expressed an unfeigned surprise that things went on well under her government, and on one occasion wrote to Mother Imelda, "I assure you it is just as if Almighty God walked about the house, and looked in everywhere to see what He could do that was kind. I do feel happy in the hope that between us all we may be able to relieve you and comfort you, and make the evening of life, if God so will, tranquil and sunny. It does seem to me as if God were carrying us in His arms. I assure you, during the seven weeks of your absence, we have not had a cloud—at least that is what I can say of the Sisters ; if I could feel I had done my duty by them a quarter as well as they have done theirs by me, I should be well content. Surely this is God's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes."

Being naturally of a retiring and reserved disposition, she suffered much in her new position as Prioress. "I felt so miserable," she wrote, "I could have run away. Mother Imelda's kindness and indulgence, and all she did to sweeten the pill, I never shall forget ; and very soon it became sweet, for the simple reason that I learnt to know what it was to live and work as 'yoke-fellow' with an Angel.

"I use the word gravely, and in no way as it is sometimes used, as a word of foolish praise or fondness. Often, very often, when I have been with her, and noticed that marvellous purity, which expressed itself in a thousand nameless ways, the absence of all passion, the clearness of vision, the spiritual beauty, the peace and tranquillity of soul, never ruffled, never disturbed—I used-to think, 'I am surely living with an Angel of God,' and I used to recall Longfellow's description of the effect of the Angel's reign, when one took the place of King Robert of Sicily, to teach him a lesson of humility.

"How can I ever lose the memory of those happy days!—the mornings in choir we have spent side by side, when her clear voice led the recitation of the Office so firmly and joyously; and when, in the hour of meditation, her very attitude was a lesson of reverence and recollection. After Mass she made her visits to the different altars, and generally went into the garden to say her Rosary. How often have I watched her, with her happy face lit up with its beautiful smile, Rosary in hand, passing under the pink may-trees. I would go to her room and wait for her to take her to breakfast, and she would enter joyous and beaming, and that was generally the moment for some of our happiest words—some thought that had come into her mind, during meditation perhaps—a verse of the Psalms, or a word of the Office. As she unlocked the post-bag, she would let her interior musings escape, and I own to laying little snares to elicit such revelations, for I loved those first words—they came from her heart so embalmed with the fragrance of prayer.

"That the offices of Provincial and Conventual Prioress might easily clash is self-evident, if there were tenaciousness on one side or want of tact on the other. All I can say is that for nearly ten years that we stood in those mutual relations, there never was a second when she made her authority felt as an embarrassment to that of the house: that, as she herself expressed it, there never was a cloud, or the shadow of a cloud, between us; that all I did, all I wished, all I proposed was known to her; my troubles and anxieties were hers; she heard all, she helped all, she supported me in all, but in action she always kept herself in reserve. I can imagine the case, as between the two offices, to be a source of trial and difficulty, requiring self-command and much patience and prudence. But my personal experience of it during those ten years was that it was one unclouded, serene, and sunny expanse of blue sky; a sort of foretaste of Paradise, the daily intercourse with a soul just, pure, wise, tender, and sympathetic, with every barrier of reserve, human fear, or human respect put away; it was the daily realisation of that entire mutual confidence which is the best part of friendship, and which I have called a foretaste of Paradise, because it seems to realise our idea of what blessed souls must feel towards one another in Heaven."

During the war between France and Germany, a time of sadness and difficulty to so many religious communities, several French Dominican nuns took refuge in England, and were joyfully received in the different houses of the Congregation. Those who were quartered at Stone were taken special care of by Mother Francis Raphael. She was a true mother to them, and their gratitude was unbounded.

On their return to their native country, they made her name widely known among the French members of the Order, and thus gained for her many friends, who afterwards were of much assistance, by introducing to her notice some important documents when she was writing the "History of S. Dominic."

In 1876 it was decided by the Bishop that the Sisters must be withdrawn from Clifton, the first home of the Congregation, and this step, though necessary, could not but be painful. Amongst other things, Mother Imelda "felt a peculiar grief," wrote Mother Francis Raphael, "in closing a sanctuary in which Mass had so long been said, and often expressed her desire to open another, so that God's glory might lose nothing. Almost as she expressed the wish, an opportunity was granted her for gratifying it. A letter arrived from a community of Dominican nuns at Brébières in France, saying they were very poor, too poor to furnish a chapel and an altar for themselves; that they were encouraged by our hospitality to their Dominican Sisters of Châlons and Bonnay to hope that we should help them. Mother Imelda was delighted. She thanked God, as if she had received some great favour, for it seemed to her He had granted her desire, and was asking her to open another sanctuary to supply for the one she was so sorrowfully closing. Accordingly she wrote and promised them the help they required, and packed up altar-linen, candlesticks, silver ciborium, and chalice, in short everything necessary for the celebration of Mass, and despatched it to Brébières before we left Clifton.

"We came home together. May passed, and no news from Brébières, and we began to feel anxious. June came, bringing with it Corpus Christi and the Feast of the Sacred Heart. I will try and relate what occurred that day, as accurately as I can, though very possibly it may read as if coloured by the imagination. During the Mass I was reading the Offertory, which runs thus:—

"'O Lord my God, in the simplicity of my heart, I have joyfully offered Thee all these things: and I have seen with great joy Thy people which are here present, offer Thee their offerings. Oh! God of Israel, keep for ever this will of their hearts. Alleluia' (1 Paralip. xxix. 17). I remembered that these were some of Mother Margaret's favourite words. 'I feel sure,' I thought to myself, 'our Mother is thinking, "that was her spirit, but what have I done? She built up, and I have only pulled down"—and yet it would not be true; she has built up too—and then there is Brébières——'

"At the moment of consecration a feeling of devotion came over me which I cannot describe—so powerful it overwhelmed me; nor did it pass away, for as I rose from the prostration, I was conscious of something—not *seeing* certainly, but as if our Lord, in all but visible presence, came from the altar across the Sanctuary, down our choir, and stood before our Mother's stall. I *felt*, if I did not hear His footsteps. I was conscious of each step. The sense of His close Presence was almost more than I could bear—it was overpowering.

"When Mass was over and we left the choir, I as usual went to our Mother's room, to take her down to breakfast. Looking at her face, I saw on it that look of recollection, and that beautiful blush which I had learnt indicated that her soul had been touched in some special way. Presuming on the familiarity she allowed me, I whispered, 'Has there been a little dew this morning?' She smiled, but gave me no answer. 'Just tell me one thing: what were you thinking of at the Offertory?' No answer. 'Was it not this?' (repeating what I have said above). 'Why, yes; but how did you guess that?'—'I knew it; but now, after the consecration?'—'You have asked questions enough,' she said; 'we will go to breakfast.'—'Well, if you will not tell me your secrets, I will tell you mine;' and I related what had passed. Then she owned to having felt exactly the same. 'At least,' she said, 'not *just* like that: you know my wall of flesh is too thick, but it is true I *did* feel what was very unusual.' A few days passed, and again we were together opening the post-bag. A letter with a foreign post-mark fell out—'Brébières: Feast of the Sacred Heart.' She glanced over it, and read the opening lines. 'Ah! how nice! they have got the things—but what is all this?' I pounced upon the letter. It was to say that after a long delay the things came just in time to put up their altar, so that the first Mass could be said on the *Feast of the Sacred Heart.* It was said at 7 A.M., and all offered the Mass and Communion for their generous benefactress, in a rapture of joy and gratitude; and so, at *that very moment, on that very day*, when our Lord had seemed to come and thank her, the first Mass was being said, and all these prayers of gratitude were being poured out for her!"

For as many as twenty-four years Mother Francis Raphael had been collecting materials for a complete life of S. Catherine of Siena, and as the year 1880 was the fifth centenary of her death in 1380, it was felt desirable that the work should be finished before her festival in April. But with the distracting duties of Prioress of a convent that numbered over sixty nuns, it was impossible to secure leisure for literary work. She went therefore, in October 1879, to the convent at Stoke-on-Trent, where she was able to devote herself to this important work. Wonderful to say, it was finished in the brief space of six weeks. As it is a large octavo volume of 640 pages, some idea can be formed of the diligence of her application, and the facility with which she wrote. The book gives the reader a vivid idea, not only of the personal life of the Saint, but also of her surroundings, and the history of the times in which she lived. The work was finished in time to be published before the celebration at Stone, for the centenary of S. Catherine of Siena. It has been translated into

German and French, and is certainly the most complete life of the Saint in any language.

Everything connected with that joyful festival was carried out with much solemnity, and there was one memorable feature in the celebration which was a source of great joy. The venerable Cardinal Newman was present. "Cardinal Newman," writes Mother Francis Raphael, "with great kindness and condescension, invited himself to our festival. The Bishops and priests were already in the sanctuary when he arrived. Mother Imelda and I waited to receive him, and I shall never forget seeing the dear old man enter, his kind manner, and the pleasant words he spoke. We took him to the infirmary tribune, whence he could assist at the function unseen. From thence the sanctuary and choir certainly presented a beautiful spectacle, all lit up by the April, sun. After dinner he took part in the procession of the relics round the garden, wearing his scarlet robes." In gratitude for the honour he showed the Community by being present at their festival, Mother Imelda promised that a prayer should be offered for him every evening in public, which was continued till his death.

In the archives at Stone, more than one letter of the Cardinal is preserved as a valuable treasure. One was written in answer to sympathy expressed with him when death deprived him of his friend, Father Ambrose S. John.

"Thank you," he writes, "for your letter, so full of sympathy. Every one who is not cut off himself has to bear to have his friends cut off from him, for scarcely any two lives are synchronic, or end together.

"It has been a great shock, but, thank God, not for an instant have I been unable to recognise it as a great mercy. But I do not expect ever to recover from it; and that I do believe to be the intention of it on the part of our loving Lord: it is the infliction in love of a wound that will never close. You are one of those who, from the number of years you have known me, can estimate what my loss is."

In 1876 a copy of "Songs in the Night" was sent to Dr. Newman, which he acknowledged in the following gracious words :—

Easter Day, 1876.

"MY DEAR SISTER RAPHAEL,—I don't think I can be wrong in ascribing to you the Poems dated S. Dominic's Convent, and the welcome gift which has been made to me of them.

"They are very beautiful, and I hope will have a large sale, and do a great deal of good.

"It was a great pleasure to me to see you had in one of them given a brilliant setting to my 'Grammar of Assent.' It is a fresh benefit to my work, for I do not forget that at the time of my writing it, you made yourselves at Stone partners of whatever is valuable in it, by giving me the help of your good prayers."

After his visit to Stone, during S. Catherine's Triduo, he wrote the following : "I hope the other days of the Triduo will go off as well as yesterday. S. Catherine was present then, and I think every one must have profited by her blessing."

On the 22nd of May 1880, Cardinal Newman went to Oxford, spending there the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and lodging at Trinity College. On Trinity Sunday he preached twice in the Catholic Church in the city, this being the first time he had preached in Oxford since his conversion. The following verses were written by Mother Francis Raphael in allusion to this event, and were sent to the Cardinal in a letter of congratulation for the Feast of S. Philip, May 26. He was very much pleased, and expressed his sense of the sympathy shown, in his usual kindly manner. The lines have been printed in America, but never in England, and are inserted here as a memorial of the gratitude felt by those he honoured with his friendship.

OXFORD REVISITED.

THE PAST.

" Calm days in cloistered shades, whose very air
Is fragrant with the thoughts of ancient times,
Where from old towers fall continuous chimes,
Breaking the silence with a call to prayer :
Such days be mine ! 'mid these grey walls that wear
Their tangled tapestry of purple bloom,[1]
Grant me a blameless life and quiet tomb."

'Twas so he dreamed ; but ruthless hands will tear
The clinging tendrils from their buttressed home.
Youth's dreams are fled, and duty's dread command
Breaks up his life, with all it hoped and planned,
And drives him on an unknown shore to roam.
Yet sure a " kindly light " and guiding hand
Will lead him safely to a better land.

THE PRESENT.

Then hushed for years those slumbering echoes lay,
Which once resounded to a voice that spoke
To listening crowds, within whose hearts awoke
New life, new sense ; wielding a magic sway,
Whose perfumed memory ne'er shall pass away.
The years roll on, and he returns once more,
And those grey walls re-open wide their door.
Past farewells blend with welcomes of to-day,
And the old tones re-echo as of yore.

[1] At page 369 of the *Apologia* occurs the following :—

" I took leave of my first college, Trinity, which was always so dear to me. There used to be much snapdragon growing on the walls, opposite my windows there, and for years I had taken it as an emblem of my own perpetual residence, even until death, in my university."

He also refers to this snapdragon, and what he considered its allegory, in a short poem published in his volume of " Verses on Various Occasions."

But not as in old times it is with him,
Whose eyes to-day with loving tears are dim :
A joy is in his heart unknown before ;
No sad regrets those crowning glories stain,
In life and death his loss has turned to gain !

THE FUTURE.

The Past is past ; the longest day must end,
But not in storm the sunset hour draws near :
A gracious wind has swept the horizon clear,
Or only left the airy clouds that lend
A tenderer grace where all the roses blend.
Glory to God in heaven ! One in Three !
O blessed faith ! O glorious Trinity !
E'en to the last Thy splendours dost Thou send
Gilding the mountain top, the heaving sea,
The sunset clouds, the vast immensity !
Thine was the light on which from boyhood's days
Those eyes have loved to fix their wondering gaze.
It led him on through paths he could not see,
Past, present, future ; all he finds in Thee !
Shine on, sweet light, through long Eternity !

In the August of the next year, 1881, the retreat to the Community was given by his Lordship the Bishop of Birmingham, and at its close the news was announced that the Most Reverend Father Larroca, General of the Order of S. Dominic, was in England, and intended to visit the convent. After his canonical visitation, the General wrote a formal testimony of his entire satisfaction at the condition in which he had found the Community, and his approbation of all that had been done to promote regular observance. This solemn approval of the highest authority in the Order was a joy to all, and seemed to crown the work that superiors and subjects had laboured so diligently to achieve. It was a *Nunc Dimittis* to the Provincial, Mother Imelda Poole.

A few weeks afterwards she left Stone on a visit to S. Mary Church, never to return alive. "On the

Saturday before she left us," writes Mother Francis Raphael, "she asked me to accompany her to the burial-ground at the bottom of the garden. We went down together: it was a lovely September afternoon, sunny and peaceful. 'I want to show you where I should like to be buried,' she said. 'When I die, you must lay me on the farther side of the Cross; then you must be on my right hand, and Sister Rose on my left.' She spoke in her usual gay, sweet manner, but I could scarcely bear to listen. . . . I felt a sadness in my heart that I could not put into words, yet with no presentiment of evil: only that it seemed to me that there was a sweetness and tenderness in all she did and said, only too much like the evening sunshine of an autumn day.

"That was our last walk together."

Mother Imelda left Stone for S. Mary Church on the 22nd of September 1881, and her last words to the Prioress, before her departure, were, "*Forti animo esto*: remember S. Raphael; I shall be back for his feast." These words, *Forti animo esto*, "Be of good heart," are those said by the Archangel S. Raphael to Tobias (v. 13).

On the 10th of October, the Feast of S. Lewis Bertrand, whom she had drawn as her patron for the year, Mother Imelda was taken ill at S. Mary Church, and on the 13th a telegram called Mother Francis Raphael to her death-bed.

"When we reached the convent at S. Mary Church," she wrote, "the first words told me all. She was insensible, and had just received Extreme Unction. From that state she never rallied. The doctors did all that was possible, but without effect. We watched her till 1 A.M., when she died; no agony, no struggle, not a change or distortion on that beautiful face, so sweet in its purity. During that time we twice sang the *Salve*, and the last time we thought there was a faint expression on her countenance, as though she heard and understood. I thought it was so; the failing senses had awakened to the familiar sounds of the music, so often sung, so specially dear to her during life."[1]

In her private journal Mother Francis Raphael thus records her feelings at that time :—

" I had to read the Last Recommendation.—Yes ! I bade my Mother's soul go forth. I did not get her blessing—not a look—not a word. But it was best so. First, it was God's will, and that is always best. It was the greatest sacrifice I could make, and that is best, and it left no room for nature. Had she recognised me, and spoken my name, I must have broken my heart by that bedside. As it was, God had withdrawn her within the veil—His veil, and she was His, all His, nothing of earth left. I thank Him that in that hour of mortal anguish He helped me to do two things—to accept it all in peace, and to bow and consecrate myself to serve the Community in whatever capacity He may choose. Obedience until death and unity of heart at any cost. Now I have nothing left, except for Him and for them, and I thank Him that it is so. Oh ! what a dark cloud lies before me ! I plunge into it, and abandon myself."

Mother Mary Imelda's body was taken home to Stone and buried, not in the lowly spot she had chosen, but beside that of Mother Margaret, in the choir before the altar. At the funeral, the text of the sermon was taken from the Book of Tobias (xii. 17, 18, 21, 22), being the words of the Archangel S. Raphael : " And the Angel said to them, Peace be to you, fear not, for when I was with you I was there by the Will of God ; bless ye Him and sing praises to Him. . . . And when he had said these things, he was taken from their sight, and they could see him no more. Then they, lying prostrate for three hours upon their faces, blessed God; and rising up, they told all His wondrous works." The text was suggested to the preacher by the chaplain of the convent, Father Charles Ryder, and every one felt that it applied with singular fitness to the angelic soul that had gone.

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[1] It is the custom in the Dominican Order to sing the *Salve Regina* (" Hail, Holy Queen ") every evening in procession after Compline, and it is sung also round the bed of a religious who is dying. This custom is very ancient, and many beautiful stories are told in connection with it in the early chronicles of the Order.

On hearing of Mother Imelda's death, His Eminence Cardinal Newman wrote to Mother Francis Raphael the following letter:—

"THE ORATORY, *October* 16, 1881.

"MY DEAR MOTHER PRIORESS,—Yesterday I heard from Sister Mary Gabriel of your immense trial. But He who is immensity itself will enable you to bear it, and will turn it to good. And while your hearts are torn, you will feel (I speak from experience) that you would not have it otherwise.

"God prepares us all for that day, which must come for every one of us, whether suddenly or with warning, whether soon or late.

"I said Mass this morning for dear Sister Imelda and for all of you."

As the Cardinal had visited the Community in the season of joy, so now his kind heart moved him to comfort them in the time of their sorrow. He therefore expressed his desire to say Mass over Mother Imelda's grave, and November 10, set apart for the commemoration of all the departed members of the Order, was the day fixed. Having accidentally left his ring at home, he wore Dr. Ullathorne's consecration ring, which had been given to the convent as a memento.

Afterwards in the Chapter Room, the venerable Cardinal addressed the Community with some words of sympathy, that were carefully taken down and preserved with deep gratitude.

"My dear Sisters in Christ, I said to you, last time I was here, that God had taken care of you, and was taking care of you; and now I say that He will take care of you. . . . For us who believe, the hardest blows are not only made easy, but the easier to bear; they become all joy. As in the case of so many of the Martyrs, after the first sharp slash, so to speak, our sorrow becomes positively sweet; a bitter sweet, I grant you, but still very sweet. You must all know the history of the Martyrs of Lyons; they were made to sit in a red-hot chair of iron; and they said that after the first pang, the fiery torment was positive physical pleasure to them, so much strength and consolation did God pour into their hearts. And as His grace sweetened the torments of the Martyrs, so He can and does sweeten our sufferings of mind and heart in the loss of those we love. I am only saying to you what I feel myself. The older we grow the more we feel that those who are gone are nearer to us than before; and you are sure, in the case of the two dear Mothers you have lost, that they will help you more than when they were with you."

He then spoke familiarly of his long friendship with them both, how he was sure they would pray for their children, and hoped they would pray also for him, that he might persevere to the end.

He asked afterwards to be taken to the chior, that he might pray by Mother Margaret and Mother Imelda's graves. "Dr. Northcote, myself, and another Sister accompanied him," writes Mother Francis Raphael. "He knelt by the two graves for some time in silent prayer, and we all knelt with him. There was a most wonderful hush and silence all the time: no sound indoors or out, but a profound stillness. It was a dull grey day; but, as we still knelt there, one clear bright ray of sunshine suddenly darted through the casement and fell directly on dear Mother Imelda's grave. The effect of that silence and that ray of light was something impossible to describe. The Cardinal said, as he returned through the cloister, ‘I would not have missed that for worlds.’ Little we thought, on the occasion of his visit at S. Catherine’s Triduo, when his next would be—and a more touching and consoling offering of friendship and sympathy he could not have given us.”

In speaking of Mother Imelda, some time after her death, to one who had been intimately associated with her, Mother Francis Raphael wrote: “The beauty of that soul, as it was revealed to us, is a possession for life. The Sisters often speak of my loss; they know little of my possession. It is a possession that we both prize beyond anything which it is likely life will offer us again, and on which to dwell in memory seems to draw us nearer to the angels. So now, as every day draws us nearer to that other shore, where we see the light of the dawn just breaking, it is sweet to feel so sure of one who will be there to greet us when we land. There will be One greater standing there, as He stood on the shore of Tiberias that early Resurrection morning; but those who have gone before us in faith, we know that ‘He will also bring with Him,’ and so shall ‘we ever be with the Lord.’ This at least is no dream, but one of those sure words of promise which, like our memories, are a possession for ever and ever.”

“Nearer to heaven, nearer to the home
Where garnered lies thine everlasting store,
Whence fall sweet voices, saying to thee, ‘Come!
Fight the good fight which we have fought before,
Then come to us, and we shall part no more!

Till then, stand firm and fearless at thy post,
And still with dying fingers clasp the sword;
He wins the prize at last who loses most,
Gives forth his life, and asks for no reward,
But in the Victor’s Book his name is scored.’”

—*Songs in the Night.*

VI. MOTHER FRANCIS RAPHAEL AS MOTHER PROVINCIAL.

Nov. 25, 1881, till April 11, 1894.

As every one foresaw, Mother Francis Raphael succeeded the Superior she had so tenderly loved, and assisted with such loyal fidelity, being unanimously elected Prioress Provincial by the Chapter of the Congregation assembled at Stone, on November 25, 1881. Hitherto, as Prioress of the convent at Stone, she had governed only that one house; now, as Prioress Provincial, she had charge of the other houses also of the Congregation, namely, those at Stoke-on-Trent, Bow, and S. Mary Church, numbering in all over a hundred religious.

She began the labours of her office with a heart sorrowful enough, from having lately lost her most intimate friend, but full of courage, and determined to devote her whole energies to the interests of those committed to her charge; and she loved to repeat that prayer of her patron, S. Catherine, "O Lord, I commend to Thee my beloved children, who are to me as my very soul."

On S. Raphael's Day (October 24, 1881) she had written, in answer to the congratulations of the Sisters—

"Your kind and loving words give me great comfort, and I thank you all for them, and assure you that all I want to support me just now, I find in the effort to serve you and return your great charity. Be sure this grace will be our sanctification; it will doubtless demand many sacrifices, but we shall, please God, make them with tranquil hearts, and the fruit of sacrifice will be reaped in abundance of peace. . . . . I always feel remorse when any one speaks of me as having crosses, and fear it must be that I grumble. In reality our Lord deals so gently with me, that nothing is a cross so long as you are all happy."

One of the Sisters at Stone, speaking of her government as Mother Provincial, writes, "Does not Carlyle say somewhere that 'Genius discovers what is the prime moving power in each individual character?' She certainly possessed this power in a very marked manner, and was able to win the entire confidence of the most reserved. This was her gift by nature. But she also possessed, by grace, an intense love of souls. She had learnt from S. Catherine of Siena something of the value of a rational soul, and she spared no labour to make others understand themselves and to realise the personal love of God for them."

"No one," she said to a Sister, on her death-bed, "can have the least idea how strong is the tie between a Mother and her spiritual children. The ties of flesh and blood are nothing compared to it." But though so tender in her love, she had a strong aversion to anything like "sentimental affection," and nipped in the bud the slightest tendency to foolish or inordinate attachment. She had a great dread of what she used to call "woman worship," that is, of allowing any Sister to serve her as Superior instead of God, and of letting love for herself interfere in the slightest way with the love due to our Lord only. "God alone" was not merely her motto, but the true active principle of her conduct. She knew well S. Catherine's teaching, that "no souls are so capable of solid and lasting friendship as those whose hearts are truly detached; for they and they only can love in God, and to them belongs the happy privilege of giving free course to a tenderness which, binding them the closer to the Sacred Heart, is free from all danger of selfishness." If, therefore, she thought she detected in any one what looked like an inordinate attachment towards herself, she would repel it with vigour and even sternness. But during her last illness she acknowledged to a sister how much this had cost her, and how acute had been the pain she had suffered herself in giving these necessary rebuffs. "But I had to do it for my own sake," she added, "as well as for yours, for what should you and I have become if we had followed merely our own natural inclinations, and loved each other according to nature unruled by grace? Superiors have their own hearts to guard as well as those of their spiritual children. Never forget that." On another occasion she said, "All my life I have had to fight against loving people too much, and especially since I have been a religious Superior. You must understand that Superiors do not belong to themselves, and what they give to one, may seem at least to be taken from others, even if it be not so in reality."

When she found souls in trouble and depression from too much self-introspection, she would earnestly exhort them to cease looking at themselves and their own miseries, and to turn to God instead. "Do leave yourself alone," she would often exclaim, "and go to God; the more miserable you feel yourself, the more reason you have to go to Him. What do you think is the meaning of *misericordia*, mercy? It means a heart for the miserable. Well, then, just plunge your wretched little self with all your miseries into that abyss of mercy, and there leave it." The words of S. Catherine of Siena, "What have you to do of yourselves?" and our Lord's words to her, "My daughter, think of Me, and I will think of you," may be considered the epitome of her spiritual advice.

Her impression was that when God had deprived her, by Mother Imelda's death, of her greatest earthly treasure, and had made her Superior in her place, thus making her Mother instead of daughter, He had bestowed upon her the grace of true Motherhood, so that not in name only, but in reality, she regarded all committed to her charge as her true spiritual daughters. But she always remembered that her relationship with her subjects; with one and all, was spiritual—real, certainly, but spiritual. She was their true Mother, but the Mother of their souls primarily, and therefore, though full of motherly tenderness for their temporal welfare and bodily well-being, nothing was to be allowed to interfere in the slightest degree with their spiritual interest and the perfection of their souls. Though their Mother, they belonged to God, not to her: the Lord had said to each of them, "Thou art Mine"; and therefore she had a holy dread of coming in the slightest degree between them and God.

"Her whole spiritual direction," writes one who knew her well, and loved her dearly, "tended always to draw you away from self and created things, to adhere to God only. She had a horror of drawing affection to herself. 'Any affection,' she often said, 'in religious life, that is not wholly in God and for God, is a pestilence.' When I told her, not long before her death, that I felt then, and always had felt, that all her intercourse with me had been with the single object of leading me to God, and that this had been its effect, the fervour of her thankfulness was intense. 'What are books? ' she exclaimed—'What are talents? The only thing of real value is a soul. If I have ever helped a soul to love God more, that is better than any other possible thing.'

"She never pressed direction on any one, both on principle, and also (I have often felt) from genuine humility, which made her unwilling to offer that for which she had an unusual gift, spiritual advice. You had to take the first step, and to give your confidence—she would never endeavour to elicit it; but when you did give it, she returned it with a maternal care and affection impossible to put into words. She took your soul to her heart, and became truly its mother. I always used to feel that she combined the strength and power of a man with all the delicate tenderness of a woman. Though the powers of her mind were so great, nothing, however trivial in itself, was too small for her keenest attention, if it affected the interests or happiness of others."

From her own relations with Mother Imelda, she had come to understand the support of a Mother's love, and yet how, after all, God, and God only, and God for His own sake, is the true happiness of the soul and of life. "How strange to think" she wrote, "that the loss of what we love best should bring comfort! but it does, and it is only what our Lord said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I go away, I will send Him.'" And in her private journal she wrote, on July 31, 1882, the anniversary of Mother Imelda's birthday and profession day, "She would have been sixty-seven to-day. I went to Communion, and thanked God for all the graces given to her beautiful soul. I thank Him for her thirty-two years of religious profession. I thank Him for the thirty years of her intimate friendship. I thank Him for having delivered her from an evil world, and received her among the angels. I thank Him for enabling me to give her up without a struggle. I thank Him for the desolation of my own life, which is the sweet pledge that my prayer has been heard. I thank Him for the sure and certain hope of a blissful immortality. How long, O Lord, how long?"

The tenderness of love, combined with the perfect resignation of will, and the intense peace of soul that she often mentions at this period, prove how pure and unselfish her attachment to Mother Imelda had been.

The Bishop of Adelaide in South Australia had expressed his desire that a convent of the congregation of S. Catherine of Siena should be founded in his diocese; and on July 12, 1883, Sister Rose Columba Adams, who had been Prioress of the convent at S. Mary Church, with five companions, embarked on the steamship *Orient* for the distant foundation. One of the five was the daughter of Dr. Wm. G. Ward, then editor of the

Dublin Review, and she died there on September 30, 1894, Mother Rose Columba having already gone to her reward on December 30, 1891.

Mother Francis Raphael, or Mother Provincial, as she then was, accompanied the little party to the steamer, and thus describes the parting scene in a letter to the community at Stone :—

"We all passed the night at the convent of the Sisters of Providence at Hampstead, and the next morning the Prior of St. Dominic's (V. Rev. Father Albert Buckler) said Mass for us and gave us Holy Communion. After Mass he preached a farewell sermon to the little band of missionary Sisters, and as a blessing for their journey gave them Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The orphan girls sang the hymn, 'Hail, Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star,' as appropriate before a long sea-voyage. . . . At Fenchurch Street the crush was terrible, and four of the Sisters were separated from the others, and only got into the carriage at the last moment. Though ludicrous afterwards, this at the moment was real anguish. . . . On the steam-tender we found the Jesuit fathers, who, much to the joy of the Sisters, were to sail in the *Orient* with them. One of these was Father Sturzo, a Sicilian duke, bound as a missionary to Australia. I made bold to introduce my Sisters to them ; they were most kind, promised three Masses every morning (weather permitting), and every help. . . . . I feel sure they will not want for friends. At last the bell rang. I don't suppose I shall ever see such a scene again. Our own partings were loving and tearful enough, but all the crowd around us were embracing and weeping—mothers and sons. One poor lady among the emigrants shrieked on parting with a young man, evidently her son, and kept crying out after he had left her. I could not describe it. Then, after we got down to the quarter-deck, from whence we had to cross to the tender, there came a rush of the emigrants down the ladder after us for more last farewells. This so crushed the crowd together, I really did not know what would come of it; but suddenly a big strong man (unknown) stood by our side, and without looking at us or speaking a word, extended his arms like balustrades, and kept us safe and sound, shoving off all who pressed on us. S. Teresa Joseph said he was a foreigner.

"At last we were on board the tender. All the travellers came to that side of the steamer, our Sisters among them, and there were last farewells, cries, waving of handkerchiefs, kissing of hands, and then cheer after cheer, responded to by those on the tender—altogether a scene never to be forgotten; it made you feel as if all that great crowd were very dear to you, and you were one with all of them."

On account of the cholera, the *Orient* had been ordered to avoid the Mediterranean, and to go round the Cape of Good Hope, so that the Sisters had a longer sea-voyage than usual. They were received by the Bishop of Adelaide with the kindest welcome, and after struggling for some years with all the usual difficulties of a new foundation in a strange land, are now thoroughly established, and doing much good work for souls. Mother Provincial, while on her death-bed, in 1894, was cheered by the tidings of the completion of their chapel, considered to be the finest yet erected in the colony, the increase of their numbers, and their hopes of future expansion.

Bishop Ullathorne described Mother Provincial, as "one of those many-sided characters who can write a book, draw a picture, rule an Order, guide other souls, superintend a building, lay out grounds, or give wise and practical advice with equal facility and success;" and of these varied talents her gift for superintending improvements in material buildings was exercised during a three-months' stay at S. Mary Church, where the choir for the Community was finished, the orphanage repaired, and many alterations effected that greatly added to the general comfort and convenience of the inmates. "What a year this has been!" she noted in her journal. "Probably the most important in my little life! And yet, let ten years pass, and all will have faded away into nothingness, like those past years of which the chimes of S. Mary Church and the verbena scents remind me! That people should attach any importance to things of time, or should think any of their acts important, except a good act of contrition, is the real marvel. So I will make one."

During the time these material improvements were occupying her attention, the grave illness of the Bishop of Birmingham caused her and all the Sisters deep sorrow and anxiety.

On October 2, 1884, she wrote: "This morning, as I woke, it seemed as if some one whispered to me the words, 'Take all that shall be brought upon thee, and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience' (Ecclus. ii. 4.) With all my heart I said, 'AMEN.' That morning's post brought news of the Bishop's serious illness. I cannot express how anxious I feel about it. It is quite the worst of crosses, as far as the outside goes." And on October 6, in a letter to S. Mary Church, "Alas! no good news of the Bishop. The doctor finds him more seriously ill than he has ever been before, even two years ago. He hopes for the best, but says the chances are against him, and this from a doctor is as bad as possible. I am prepared for the very worst, and so must all of you, my dear ones, be. We all know what his loss will be to us, and shall feel one for another without need of words. I thought, three years ago, nothing could ever be the affliction to me that our beloved Mother's loss was; but in some ways this will be worse. Independent of the personal loss (and I could never say what the dear Bishop has been, and has done for me during my whole religious life), there is the shock to the Congregation, and the deprivation of guidance to so many souls who have leant on him as they never can lean on any other.

"Still, my most beloved Sisters, for I write to all, whatever we may feel, do not forget that our hope must be in no man whatever, but in God alone. No flesh and blood is necessary. S. Dominic was not necessary to his Order; and when God took him, the Order stood. Never let personal love and devotion—and who deserves this from us if he does not—obscure our sense that God is our rock and our firmament, 'a very present help in exceeding great trouble' (Ps. xlv. 1). It is the fear of losing a grasp on that truth in the great anguish which seems coming upon us, which distresses me most of all; for I am certain, with an infallible certainty, that if we do not fail in confidence, God will not fail towards us. Do not therefore merely pray for the preservation of this precious life, but pray earnestly that if God sees fit to take it, and call him to his well-earned reward, we may all of us have the grace of perfect resignation and abandonment to His Holy Will. You know the words of Holy Scripture, 'When father and mother forsake me, then the Lord taketh me up;' and in the great bereavements which we have had, and shall still have to endure together, the Divine word will be verified, and we shall find that God will suffice to us."

A week later she writes to the same convent: "I know your hearts must all be full of joy, as mine truly is—joy and gratitude at the great favour granted us through our Lady of the Holy Rosary. For that the dear Bishop's recovery from the very brink of death has been a grace obtained through her intercession is a fact one must be an unbeliever to doubt. Our happiness, then, is not merely to have him spared to us, but to have this pledge and certainty of her maternal love, and of the power of the Holy Rosary. She has truly shown herself a mother. None of those about the Bishop doubt for a single moment that the marvellous change must be attributed to the effects of prayer and of the blessed rose. I believe the Protestant doctor himself as good as admits it. Of course we will have a solemn day of thanksgiving in all our houses, but I must wait till I get the formal bulletin 'Out of danger.' All I can do now is to call on you to thank God and our dear Lady as fervently as you have prayed, and to lay up the precious experience of this week in your hearts, as a proof of the power of prayer, and a motive of confidence. I must also thank each dear Sister individually for her kind sympathy expressed to myself. Could I write separately to each one to assure them how very sweet their words of confidence and affection are to my heart, I would certainly do so.

"There is but one thing to be said: only let us hold together, stick to our Rule, and trust God with an unbounded trust, and neither man nor demon can harm us. '*Filias tuas nec draconum venenatorum vicerunt dentes, quia misericordia Tua adveniens sanabat illas.*'"[1] (Wisd. xvi. 10.)

All through October, however, with some variations, the accounts seemed to give little hope of entire recovery. On the 27th of November the cloud lifted, and she enters in her Journal, "Splendid bulletin from the Bishop: wonderfully better! 'Praise the Lord, for He hath done wonderful things!'" (Isa. xii. 5).

It was during this time of anxiety that on her Feast of S. Raphael, a little song was written to which she thus alludes: "The Sisters sang a new song, the burden of which was, 'Here in the dear old Home,' which made me cry. Ah! the 'dear old home'; dear indeed, but haunted with shadows, so sweet, so beautiful, all passed away. No clouds pass over our heads so swiftly as the terrible changes of time, to those whose sentence it is to live—to live on, and lose."

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[1] "Not even the teeth of venomous serpents overcame Thy children: for Thy mercy came and healed them."

Next day the Sister who had composed the song found these lines in her cell, taking up and answering its thoughts:—

WHAT THE SONG SAID TO ME.

Oh ! Home with memories haunted
  Of all that is good and dear,
Your very name has power
  To start the unbidden tear :
Your paths are full of shadows,
  Of years that have passed away :
You tell me of to-morrows,
  But I dream of yesterdays.

Chorus.

But we do not forget them, Mother,
  Here in the dear old home ;
We lived those days together
  Here in the dear old home.

" We lived "—oh ! words of sadness—
  What is there that remains ?
What sweetness that will linger ?
  What glory but fades and wanes ?
For to love is but to suffer,
  'Tis the loving nature's doom,
And you cannot change it, dear ones,
  E'en in the dear old home !

Chorus.

But here our love remains, Mother,
  Here in the dear old home ;
Not death itself can sever
  Hearts in the dear old home !

Full well do I believe it,
  For the dear old home I know ;
I know it true and faithful,
  And all to its love I owe :
But I dare not hear your voices,
  For they drown my heart in tears,
As I miss the vanished faces,
  Gone with the vanished years !

Chorus.

But the faces are not vanished, Mother—
  They wait in a better home :
There we shall meet together,
  As here in the dear old home ;
There we shall meet for ever
  As here in the dear old home.

About this time she read the Queen's Journal, and felt deeply moved by one passage : " The view so fine," writes the Queen in her sorrow, " the day so bright, the heather so beautifully pink, but no joy, no pleasure, all dead—dead ! "—" Does not one know that feeling —do not I ! Poor Queen ! I cannot but wish there was something expressed above human affection in it all, for her sake. But again and again I have felt that—dead—dead ! "

What she had already done for S. Mary Church, Mother Provincial was enabled to accomplish, in 1885, for the convent of Stoke-on-Trent, where both church and convent were still incomplete. The sanctuary of the church with a spacious choir for the nuns at right angles to it, and the chapter-room for the convent, were opened in August 1885, and during the time these improvements were being carried out, Mother Provincial displayed her talent for laying out grounds ; and the picturesque little glen in the garden, which, bright in the spring-time with primroses and blue-bells, she contrived for her children in the smoky Potteries, was always one of her favourite resorts. One of the happiest days of her life probably was August 19, 1885, the day on which the now finished church at Stoke-on-Trent was solemnly consecrated. The ceremony lasted five hours, concluding with the Pontifical High Mass, celebrated by the consecrating Bishop, Dr. Ilsley, then Auxiliary, and afterwards Archbishop of Birmingham.

A letter written about this time expresses the overflowing joy of her heart :—

" The Feast of the Assumption, our Lady of Angels, comes with special sweetness and fitness this year, just as our thoughts are full of the new sanctuary which is to be dedicated next week under that title. . . . We may hope that she will accept it as her own, and that the Holy Angels will not cease to stand around it and to guard it, as S. Gertrude saw them stand around the church of her monastery.

" Now, then, I will ask you to take part in the ceremony of next week in spirit, as I should so rejoice were you able to do in person. The consecration of a second church in the Congregation is a great grace for us all. It cannot but be the opening of a window in heaven, whence will pour down an abundance of grace and benediction. Those wonderful ceremonies are no empty rites : but the prayer and unctions, and the laborious care bestowed in the work of the Dedication, seen by the eye of faith, remove this sanctuary from the material things of this world, and enrol it among Divine things, making it truly ' The House of God.'

" I could never tell you the thoughts that have passed through my heart during the past year, as I have seen it rising. Stone upon stone, as they have been laid, have seemed to speak of the patient work by which our spiritual edifice has to be built up by little acts and little words—day by day, hardly seeming to add much, and yet every day a new growth.

" Is it not a solemn thought that, in this choir, generations of the spouses of Christ will, if it so please God, continue to sing His praises, when we have long passed away and are forgotten ?

" How deeply do we all desire that its 'foundations may be laid in justice,' and that on its gates may be written, 'Holiness to the Lord.'

" You will then, I am sure, assist in the ceremonies of Wednesday and Thursday by your fervent prayers, and will rejoice in the happiness of our Sisters at Stoke, in taking possession of what Blessed Jane of Portugal used to call 'their seats of angels.' "

In the midst of all the anxieties of her office, Mother Francis Raphael was able, by union with God in prayer, to preserve the peace of her soul. " I am unable to comprehend," she wrote in a season of trouble, " the profound peace which has taken possession of my soul. I cannot trace it to any exterior cause. In exterior things there would be plenty that might disturb, or occupy, at any rate ; but they all seem a million miles away. I hope there is no delusion in it, but it seems to me almost like that 'quiet, tranquil, almost angelic peace,' which S. Philip says we may enjoy even in this life. I suppose there is no necessity for understanding one's spiritual conditions, and there is a peace which 'passeth all understanding.' This seems to be it."

One of the branch houses had been founded by Mother Margaret in the east of London, in the Bow Road, not far from the Bow Station of the North London Railway. A church, and afterwards a convent, had been erected. But the Sisters found that a district called Bow Common, a common now only in name and memory of what it once was, lying between the Bow Road and Poplar, was in a state of spiritual destitution. A small room was hired to act as a Sunday-school, and here the Sisters began to collect and instruct the poor children, whom they found utterly ignorant of religion. Mother Provincial rejoiced to hear of the zealous work that had begun, and wrote to the Sisters the following letter of encouragement :—

"*January* 26, 1884.

"Very few things have given me as much pleasure as hearing of the new work which is opening to your Community at Bow Common. I hope you will all take part in it by your sympathy and your prayers, so that it may bear fruit in the salvation of many souls. I hope also that it may be an encouragement to us all to cherish a love of souls, and to be ready to work for them in any way we can. We must all be jealous never to lose anything of the active Apostolic spirit our dear Mother Margaret impressed on us, ... or relax our efforts to keep before our eyes the love of souls as one of the objects of our Institute, remembering that we must labour for them at any sacrifice of self.

"You will see, please God, that this little work will prosper exactly in proportion as it is humble, unpretending, and all for God. The Saints did their great works, not by great Board Schools, with every sort of school appliance, but by going through the streets with a bell, as S. Francis Xavier did, and bidding the children come to the Catechism. They saved souls by teaching them to make the sign of the Cross, say their prayers, and come to the Sacraments. We think, sometimes, how glorious it would be to go out to heathen countries and convert whole nations ; and so it would, and so I hope we may do some day. But it is quite as glorious and consoling to the heart of Jesus to rescue these poor baptized souls from falling into the abyss of a yet worse heathendom ; and to many of you our Lord might say, as He did to S. Philip Neri, '*Bow* is to be your Indies !'

"Now I want to place this little work, so humble and little, and therefore, I hope, so acceptable to God, under the invocation of the Sacred Heart and S. Dunstan. To the Sacred Heart, in reparation for the many, many sins committed in these places ; and to S. Dunstan, as having been in Catholic times the patron of that district. Blessed Peter Favre tells us, in his beautiful 'Memorial,' that, in all the work done among the German and Swiss heretics (and what he did was simply marvellous), he found his chief help was in invoking the Saints of the towns in which he laboured. He had a habit as he travelled of doing so, and tells wonderful things of the help they gave therein.

"I shall every day say an invocation to the Sacred Heart, with 'Pray for us, S. Dunstan,' for this special work, and shall ask others to do the same. And I feel a joy in thinking of the casting into the ground of this little mustard-seed, which, if it please God, may grow into a great tree, and rescue many, many souls who will love God to all eternity, and who without it might never have known His Name."

The little mustard-seed, thus planted by the zeal of the Sisters, has grown. Cardinal Manning was convinced of the necessity of opening a separate mission for this district; a devoted Priest, once an Anglican clergyman, Father Gordon Thompson, took charge of it, and by the generosity of a benefactor, whose name has been kept secret, a church was built under the title of "The Holy Name and our Lady of the Sacred Heart." It was consecrated on June 30, 1894. There is also a convent of Sisters of Charity to help the good work, and not very far off, in Wellington Road, Bow, a house of the little Sisters of the Assumption, for nursing the sick poor in their own homes, an institution so greatly needed in that poor and crowded district.

On March 21, 1889, the Feast of S. Benedict, His Grace Archbishop Ullathorne died at Oscott. He had been consecrated Vicar-Apostolic of the Western district in 1846, translated to the see of Birmingham in 1850; and when he retired, on account of the infirmities of age, in 1888, he had been created by Pope Leo XIII., Archbishop of Cabasa, *in partibus infidelium.*

His body was buried in the church at Stone among his spiritual children, whom he had trained, and to whom he had always been so loving a father. His loss was felt as a calamity by all, but especially by the Mother Provincial, who had been accustomed to consult him in every important matter.

The next two years were spent in editing the Archbishop's autobiography, which gives such an interesting account of his early days, and particularly of his work in Australia and Norfolk Island, and in the far more laborious and difficult task of collecting and arranging his letters, addressed to a wide circle of correspondents. She was rewarded by the assurance that this publication had clearly revealed to many who had either not known him personally, or whose acquaintance had been at most superficial, the spiritual side of his character.

Dr. Bellesheim, a Canon of the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, in a review of this volume, writes: "In this correspondence a number of letters to religious, explaining in a masterly way the principles of spiritual life, as resting on the immutable foundations of scholastic and mystic Theology, especially those that relate to Superiors reveal the Bishop, as a member of the ancient and distinguished Benedictine Order, in the most favourable light."[1]

One of the last important literary works of Mother Francis Raphael's life was the large "History of S. Dominic," which, after some delay, caused by failing strength and the interruptions of many duties, she was able to publish in 1891. This was her last original work. The character of no Saint has been more persistently misrepresented than that of S. Dominic. One of her spiritual daughters writes very happily on this subject: "Voltaire's impious saying, 'Tell plenty of lies, some of them are sure to stick,' has been only too well verified in the case of S. Dominic ; the oft-repeated calumnies against the ' Founder of the Inquisition, the cruel and bloodthirsty Dominic,' have given a gloomy colour to the picture of the Saint, even in the minds of some Catholics, and Mother Francis Raphael rejoiced to feel that she had made the real character of S. Dominic, to whom she bore a filial devotion, better known and appreciated in English-speaking countries. She received many letters from various people, thanking her for revealing him in his true colours, full of love, tenderness, and holy joy, a reflection of the Sacred Heart of his Lord and Master." To those who knew him as he really was, not even S. Philip or S. Francis of Sales can surpass him as types of tender-hearted sympathy with the afflictions of others, and of serene joy and cheerfulness of heart. In this "History of S. Dominic," Mother Francis Raphael has devoted a chapter to a masterly summary of the arguments proving the truth of the tradition of the Order, and even of the Church, that S. Dominic was the author of the devotion and confraternity of the Rosary.

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[1] Literarischer Handweiser, 1892.

The appreciative letters which Sister Francis Raphael received about her books always afforded her the most genuine pleasure. Though all her writings were intended to benefit souls, yet when she was told that some one was really the better for her labours, the news seemed to come as an agreeable surprise, and filled her with joyful gratitude. She received many such gratifying letters after the publication of "Songs in the Night." One of these, from an old friend for whom she entertained great esteem, Father Dominic Trenow, O.P., is still preserved. He thanked her for the poems, and declared that they had been solid spiritual reading for him of the best kind, and that no words could express all that he had found in them.

One of the Sisters at Stone writes, "Father J. Proctor's letter, on receipt of a copy of the ' History of

S. Dominic,' gave her great pleasure. She read it aloud to us, and said that she felt it a real honour that the sons of S. Dominic should be satisfied, and actually thank her for what she had done for their holy founder. 'I can't tell you,' she added, 'how happy it makes me. I do feel so unworthy of all this praise!'"

During the next year the "History of S. Dominic" was translated into French; and after she had given her permission for the Italian translation, Father Granello, a Dominican, obtained for her, and for her works, the special blessing of His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII. This honour filled her with gratitude, but on receiving it she said, "I feel as if the Holy Father had turned over the last page, and written *Finis* to my literary labours."

During 1893, when she was engaged in preparing materials for the projected "Life of S. Richard," she received much assistance from the Rev. Father Raymund Palmer, O.P., for which she often expressed herself as extremely grateful. When writing the "History of S. Dominic" also, she was under great obligations to him for the researches he so kindly undertook for her in the British Museum and Record Office, and for helping her with his archæological and antiquarian knowledge. She found his papers on the English Dominicans of great service.

Several of the older Sisters, who had been Mother Margaret's companions, and were venerable in the eyes of all the Congregation, were called about this time to the reward of their long and devoted service to God. Sister Mary Rose Goode, who had been Mother Margaret's chief helper, died on August 26, 1889. Of her, Mother Provincial wrote as follows:—

"Our beloved Sister Mary Rose expired at 2 A.M., after a long agony, which began at four o'clock yesterday afternoon. She has, during the last five days, suffered intensely, but with a calm, composed courage, with all her will and consciousness perfectly unclouded—fixed in accepting the Will of God. She had all her ordinary strength undiminished, and would sit upright in bed bearing the terrible distress (of breathing), with a countenance so calm and resolute, only raising her eyes to heaven now and then, and making the Sign of the Cross so firmly and deliberately.

"I can convey no idea of the impression she has left on me, but that it was the 'valiant soul,' valiant in life and in death.

"We have lost a pillar—the true Mother of the Congregation; mother to each one, for she had each one in her heart. I thanked her, in the name of all, for all she had done for us, and said there was not one but felt towards her as to a mother. She kissed my hand, and said, 'We understand one another; I have tried to do what I could.'

"During her forty-four years of religious life, she has given the unbroken example of loyal self-devotion to the Congregation, and to Superiors, giving her strong support to all alike, one after the other.

"I feel sure there is waiting for her no ordinary reward, as hers has been no ordinary service. She looks beautiful in the expression of peace."

A letter written for S. Dominic's feast, 1892, gives us an insight into her thoughts as she watched the older Sisters gradually approaching their end.

"When we watch a dear and holy soul gradually passing out of this life, and think that in a few days, or perhaps hours, she will be joined to the happy company of the Blessed, these words rise often to our hearts, '*Nos junge Beatis.*' And if we have had the happiness of being united with them in their work and their service here below, we may surely hope to join their happy company hereafter. There is the blessedness of our religious life. Poor and imperfect as we are, we are all seeking to love and serve God. We desire nothing but to belong to Him, and to work for Him. The day will come when the husk of our miseries will fall off, and our souls, clothed in all the beauty of Divine grace, will stand in His presence. 'It is a long journey,' as dear Sister Mary Francis says from time to time. But at the journey's end there is the presence of God. May we but be guided and supported on what remains of that road for us to travel, be it long or short, and reach the end in safety. There we shall find Mothers and Sisters and Patron Saints: S. Dominic and S. Catherine, and all the white-robed company. Oh, may we be of their number! 'Make us to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting!' Everything else is nothing—a little suffering, a little work and weariness—and then, *Mors in vitam, labor in otium, præsens cedit luctus in gaudium*, 'Death will be changed into life, labour into rest, and a present sorrow will be exchanged for eternal joy.'

"This is what our holy father S. Dominic tells us of in the words of his Office, and may the hope of these precious promises give us all strength and courage to persevere, till we come to stand among the glorious ranks of those whose day of trial is over, and who are safe with God."

On August 25 that same year, the Sister of whom mention is made in this letter gave up her soul to God, and Mother Provincial sent the notice of her death to one of the distant houses in the following words:

"I cannot content myself with sending you notice of the departure to God of our beloved Sister Mary Francis Lynch, without adding a few words of respect to her memory, for she is the last of that group of elder sisters who have been for so many years the props and edification of our Congregation. They bore the difficulties of our earlier beginnings, and were the real pillars of the foundation, not so much in virtue of great talents or any shining qualities, but by their spirit of unselfish self-sacrifice, of generous obedience, and devotion to the interests of the Community.

"Those who have joined us in later years have found everything perfected; regular life, regular convents, Rule and Constitutions—everything in order. But in the beginning all had to be worked out bit by bit, and this could never have been done if the instruments had been other than they were. Our elder sisters were the instruments with which Mother Margaret effected her work. They gave themselves to her, or rather to God, in the service of the Congregation, with their whole loyal hearts. Afterwards, as time went on, they gave themselves, with exactly the same devotion and simplicity, to younger Superiors. They were the true Mothers of the Congregation, but they were mirrors, and models of obedience. . . . And now this dear and holy generation has passed away, and a younger race is growing up, in whose hands the destinies of the Congregation are placed. They must not forget that it will live and flourish exactly in proportion to the fidelity and humility, to the spirit of prayer and charity of its members. If we seek ourselves in little things or great, we shall be no pillars to the edifice. If we seek God's glory, and the good of the Community, and forget ourselves, we shall carry on the work and the example of those that have gone before.

"Dear Sister Mary Francis had but one trouble during her illness. It was that the Sisters, when they came to see her, would sometimes express their respect in a way that wounded her humility. 'Tell the Sisters,' she said, 'that I like to see them, but when they come they must not praise me.' She was full of gratitude for everything done for her; grateful to her infirmarians, Superiors, the Chaplain, and every one who came near her. 'All so kind,' she used to say, 'they couldn't be kinder.' Her mind was so clear, she thought of all the absent Sisters, and asked now after one and now another, always saying a kind word of them.

"Up to within six weeks of her death, though past eighty, she had struggled to keep to Community life in every point. She had been daily to the hospital, where she had worked for many years, and as far as ever she could, was constant in choir and at recreation; saying, only a week or two before her illness, 'she liked to be with the Community as long as she could.'

"I am sure there is not one in the Congregation who does not feel that in losing her we have lost a dear Mother, and who will not pray for her as such, that she may speedily enter into her great reward."

A hospital for incurable patients had been one of Mother Margaret's favourite works: she had established one at Stone, and another at Stoke-on-Trent was founded as a memorial of her. A large house with garden attached had been secured at Stone, just opposite the church door; and as the house gradually became too small, some adjoining cottages had been utilised. But the Sisters had long felt the necessity of building a proper hospital ward to replace these dilapidated cottages. Mother Provincial now saw her way to accomplish this long-desired object, and the first stone was laid on October 24, 1892. The ward was opened on July 14, 1893, and placed under the patronage of S. Raphael the Archangel, the "Medicina Dei," who had cured Tobias of his blindness. The ward contains thirteen beds in addition to those in other parts of the building; and the patients are permanent invalids, who require constant attention, and are nursed by the Sisters. In later years after Mother Francis Raphael's death a still larger ward was built and between the two a chapel, the sanctuary walls of which are formed of sliding shutters, so that the bedridden patients have the inestimable advantage of being able to follow the Holy Sacrifice from their beds.

The completion of this work was a subject of thanksgiving to all the Community, and Mother Provincial refers to it thus: "Our Lord's goodness in allowing us to complete this work fills our hearts with thankfulness. I could only think of the dear departed ones, Mothers Margaret and Imelda, and Sisters Mary Cecilia, Francis, and Agnes (who used to work so zealously in the hospital), and wish they could have been with us. But doubtless they saw it from a better place."

The street between the hospital, or S. Mary's Home, and the church, used to be called "Green Bank," but of late years the local authority has given it the name of "Margaret Street," as a graceful acknowledgment of the respect in which the memory of Mother Margaret is held in Stone, even by those who have not the advantage of being in the Catholic Church.

The note of preparation for her own departure sounds clearly in a letter of sympathy addressed to the Sisters at Bow on the death of Sister Mary Aquinas Harting, who died there in most holy dispositions, after two years of constant suffering.

"*September* 3, 1893.

"I know that to all, to some of course more than others, there must come a blank and a reaction after all the deep feeling you have gone through. It is as though our Lord had been among you in a special way, first in the retreat, then in the last hours of our dearest Sister, now too, in all the memories that must crowd on you, of her sufferings, her great patience, her unselfish charity.

"They are all graces which touch your hearts and melt them, and make you realise in a sensible way the real end and meaning of our religious life, which is to bind us to God, to bring us closer and closer to Him, and to annihilate His enemy, our miserable, worthless *self*.

"Ah! if we could but catch fast hold of that truth, and never for a minute let it go again! God is everything and self is worse than nothing. To gain God, to make Him *ours*, to be entirely His, that is the only end of life; something we must get, no matter what suffering we have to pay as the price.

"You know our dear Sister had exactly two years of uninterrupted preparation for the end. During all that time God gave her the inestimable grace of a perfectly clear, unclouded mind. Her great and constant suffering never disturbed this in the least; so she was able to use it all, and turn it all to God. She was able to turn it all into penance and intercession, and abandonment to His Holy Will. None of us can know or guess what may pass between a soul thus lying under the rod of His chastening love and Him. All that we feel sure of is that it must have been a time of ever-increasing sanctification. . . .

"And here we are, with death also approaching us, every day nearer and nearer, with all our faculties alive and awake, and time to think, and time to work; with God speaking to us very clearly, very solemnly, and able to turn our eyes on the past, say, of a religious life: seeing it as it is, and as it has been. We can mark all the windings of that path, its multiplied graces, our multiplied failures; and still at every turn and every stumble, some fresh proofs of God's unfailing love.

"No doubt He gives, and will give us something to suffer, and so something with which to make reparation.

"But if there is anything which more than all else should pierce us through, it is the sense and the shame that hitherto we have lived so much for self, and so little for God. Our feelings, our attachments, our repugnances—these are the miseries which eat up a large portion of our lives.

"What shall we think of them all, when with clear eyes we look at them in the Light of Truth, and death is near at hand? 'Oh,' we shall say, 'that I could have seen it sooner—that I could but have seen how I was flinging away my life on dust and ashes! Ah, that I could but have realised from *the first*, that God is all, and self is nothing!' Well—let us realise it *now*; it is not too late. With God's help the scales will fall from our eyes, and He will help us to begin afresh.

"My dearest Sisters, I am not saying what I want to say, but I do feel such an inexpressible desire that we should all fasten our hearts on GOD, and adhere to Him, and never let Him go, and trust to Him, and be ready to suffer for Him (if He so will), and accept all from Him, and give all to Him. It is all we can do in this poor life of shadows; and then the day will come when the shadows will flee away, and the morning of eternal life will dawn; and then we shall see Him, as the Apostles saw Him by the Sea of Galilee, standing on the shore, waiting to welcome us, and give us our Eternal Reward—Himself."

The continual "Amen" Mother Francis Raphael uttered to all God's requirements comes out at every turn. One October, about the time of Mother Imelda's anniversary, she wrote, "October again, and again a strong, powerful impulse to wait, and prepare, and watch, and be ready for sacrifice. God only knows if now, as then, this is a warning that He is about to demand one that is costly. It could not be more costly than that was."

After a bad illness in 1890 she writes, June 14: "A great deal better. *Deo gratias!* Oh! what a good time it has been. All good—pain, and sleepless nights, and everything! I will praise the Lord, who giveth me good things! Amen, Amen."

VII. THE LAST PURIFICATION

It only now remains to describe what God did in Mother Francis Raphael's soul to prepare her for the end. Of things so sacred it is not easy to speak aright. The lily is tarnished if touched with too rude a hand, and the perfume of the rose is so delicate, that words are too gross to convey a sense of it to others. If I could present it as it ought to be painted, the picture of her soul being purified by the Hand of God, before He called her to Himself, would be full of beauty and spiritual instruction, touching in its details, and consoling in its lessons.

And as we are all preparing for that great passage, through the waters of death, when our own time shall come, it is of supreme interest to see how it has fared with others who have gone before "with the sign of faith, and who sleep in the sleep of peace."

Even, however, after death has drawn the impenetrable veil, it seems an intrusion to venture into the inner sanctuary of the soul, the holy place of the Temple of the Spirit, and to endeavour to describe to others His last gracious work therein. Does it not appear almost a profanation to disturb the silence in which the finishing touches were put by His own hands, to fit that living stone for its place in His eternal city? But for our own comfort and instruction, and to encourage others, the last days must not be passed over in silence.

The whole work of the spiritual life may be described as the gradual purification, by the hand of God, of the soul's love. This Divine process must continue, here or hereafter, until it is true in His eyes, that God alone, for His own sake, is the object of the soul's love; and the Will of God, because it is His Will, and in the way that He wills, reigns supreme in the created will. This work must imply suffering, though mingled with exceeding great joy, the fruit of love.

For some time before Mother Francis Raphael's last illness really began, it was evident to her most intimate friends that a change was gradually taking place within her. As the bodily powers were growing weaker and infirmities increasing, God was evidently preparing her for the end by presenting Himself to her soul as the only object of her knowledge and love. All else seemed to be slowly but surely withdrawn, and her whole spiritual life centred itself in the aspiration of her patron, S. Francis: "My God and my All."

For some years she had been more and more drawn to the practice of simple and entire abandonment to God. She felt, and often expressed it, that S. Ignatius' prayer, "Take and receive all my liberty," etc., exactly suggested, in its every word, what she desired to say to God, and described the attitude of her soul before Him. She often said that she did not use the imagination much in prayer, and that to do so would be more a distraction than a help, and her prayer generally took the form of a sense of God, as the Object of the soul (a word of S. Catherine of Siena she was fond of quoting), looking straight to Him as the All-Perfect, the All-Beautiful, while seeing herself before Him as a miserable nothing.

But she often used to say that there seemed a kind of barrier between her soul and God. This barrier she described as made up of the memory of sin, and all the unworthiness and unfaithfulness of nature, which she felt deeply, and was constantly making acts of contrition for, before God; and this was mixed with a kind of reverent fear, checked always by hope in His infinite mercy, a kind of wonder how one so unfaithful, as in her humility she believed herself to be, could find favour in God's sight.

In the last visit which she made to the convent at S. Mary Church, in September 1893, she received a special grace of union with God. Speaking of it to an intimate friend, she related that she was using Cardinal Newman's book of meditations, and found that it exactly suited her soul. "One day," she wrote, "it seemed to me that the 'barrier' had completely broken down. I do not know how to convey what I mean to the mind of another without using images of some sort, though to myself it exists entirely without image of any kind. It is as though a wall had broken down and I was looking through the chasm, and beheld a great void, a kind of broad sea, filled only with the thought of God—MY GOD AND MY ALL."

The effect of this grace was that, without forgetting her own shortcomings and imperfections, it was impossible to *occupy* herself with them as before. The thought that "God is everything and I myself nothing," and yet that this nothing belongs to Him, and must adhere blindly to Him, took possession of every faculty, and seemed to shut out all thought of self. Especially was this the case when the sense of God centred on the thought of "God made Man," bringing Himself thus so intensely near to us in all the mysteries of Redemption.

The result of this was to produce in her soul, not sweetness, not sensible consolation or sensible fervour, but an intense interior peace and tranquillity, quite different from anything she had before experienced. This peace she felt, as she thankfully acknowledged, even in the midst of troublesome and harassing affairs, which one in her position could not avoid. She once described it by saying, "Even when my time and attention are necessarily engaged by troublesome business, I have been conscious all the time, in the centre of my soul, of this profound quiet—a sort of *emptiness* in the presence of God. '*Vacate et videte quia Ego sum Deus*'[1] seems to express it."

The intellect appeared to have little to do with all this. It was rather an impression received passively by the soul, and surely we must acknowledge in this the touch of the finger of God.

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[1] "Be still, and see that I am God" (Psalm xlv. 11.)

Some words gathered from very private note-books will make this disposition of soul more evident. In some notes, dated S. Mary Church, September 6, 1893, under the heading, "The love of God the one thing needful," she wrote—

"Before we can get the love of God, we must desire it. There must be a darkness before there can be light. This darkness is the forgetting of all things—of one's self, one's good and bad, past sins, past everything; simply fastening the point of one's heart, mind, and soul on God, in desire. No light, no great sweetness, nothing but the deep sense that we have nothing and are nothing, that God is our All, and that we must have Him and only Him. More than this perhaps He will not think fit to give us; if so, with this must we be content.

"O my God, my Jesus! On Thee I fix my heart, my whole being, memory, understanding, and will. I will cast all else, even the thought of my sins, away, and trust all to Thee. Of one thing I am *certain*, that I desire nothing in this world but Thee, Thy love, and Thy grace. How anything so vile, so impure, so full of all evil as I am, *can* be saved, can come to Thee, can be united to Thee, I know not! All I know is that I desire it with all my heart and soul—that I desire nothing else; that if I could, I would shut myself up in a cave, and concentrate all my powers of body and soul in one unceasing act of desire, which should be, 'Give me Thy holy love—be my all; do not let me be separated from Thee—my God and my All—or rather which, without any words at all, should simply turn itself on Thee, with the eye of the soul, of the heart, in one simple interior act of intense desire.'

"This I do now. The world has passed. Life is almost past; nothing left but a few embers and dregs. No use in regrets—I have done with them. All that is left I give to God, I turn to God, I fix on God, and leave the rest to Him.

"One thing I desire of the Lord, the gift of His Divine Love. There is nothing else worthy of desire. I do not yet possess it, for to possess it is beatitude, but I stretch out the arms of my soul after it. I desire it, and nothing else. *Deus, Deus meus, sitivit in Te anima mea.* O God *my* God,—who am I to dare call Him *mine?* A thing so vile, so low, so naught—yet I rise in desire to Him who is All.

"What do I desire when I desire God? Himself, not His gifts—not sweetness nor intellectual lights, rather darkness, having neither form nor image. I desire neither taste nor vision. I desire only to leave creatures, to leave myself, and to adhere in the darkness to God. I do not presume to hope that that is love; I only hope that, stripped of all things, and of myself above all, I may feel after Him, if haply I may find Him, and that He will draw me to Himself, in His own way and time.

"But God! what is He? I know not. The All-Perfect. Perfection of truth, of goodness, of beauty, of love. Yet all this is nothing but empty words. God is All, the Fount of Being. I do not see Him nor feel Him, yet there He is. Heaven and earth and all things vanish away at the one thought of God.

"The way of God consists not in the multiplicity of devotions, but in one thing only, in knowing how to deny ourselves in earnest, inwardly and outwardly; giving ourselves up to suffer for Christ's sake, and annihilating ourselves utterly. Therefore all the days that remain to me of life, I desire to spend in asking for His holy love. In Him is all beauty; in Him is all goodness; all that is sweet, gracious, noble; all that can satisfy the heart. O Lord, give me only Thy grace and Thy love, and I ask for nothing more."

It was noticed particularly, however, by an intimate spiritual friend, that "at this very time when she seemed to be contemplating God alone without images in the imagination, when the eyes of her soul were fixed on the Supreme Beauty, and her whole being absorbed in the desire of possessing Him, the homely forms of Catholic devotion still helped and comforted her. For example, she had, when ill, a little image of our Lady of Dolours brought to her every night, and she kissed it with devotion, and would say, 'This is one of my greatest comforts.' She talked to our Lady like a child to its loving mother. Her devotion to S. Catherine deepened and intensified all through her illness, and the Life she had herself written being read to her, presented itself in such new lights, that she said over and over again, 'I can't believe I wrote that book.'"

About three weeks after writing the above extract, she was seized with her last illness on November 6, 1893. At first it was pneumonia, and while it lasted she spoke very little. She considered herself in some danger, but seemed to expect that she would recover. When convalescent from this attack, she wrote the following letter of thanks to the Community for their loving sympathy and prayers :—

"My very dear Sisters,—A few days ago I did not feel sure that I might not be going to leave you all, and I felt a great desire to say a few words to you. First, to thank you for all your prayers, which have helped me so much, and for all the love and patience with which you have borne with me. Second, to ask the charity of your forgiveness for my negligence in your service, and my bad example ; and of each one, if ever I have given any of you pain.

"In spite of all my defects, I do indeed pray for you all. May God give me a share in your good works ! Me who do nothing and feel like a bit of lumber !

"I pray that He may bless your works and increase them, but so as never to let us lose sight of the one great work of all.

"When the gates of life are ajar, one feels there is but one thing to live for, and that is *to love God better*. Let us help one another to do that, and pray for me that I may begin at last.—Your devoted and unworthy mother,

"S. M. F. RAPHAEL, O.S.D."

When the doctors had ascertained the dangerous nature of her complaint, Mother Francis Raphael wrote the following letter to a Dominican father:—

"Since you left us we have had a second opinion and consultation about this foot, and the outcome is that it proves to be a critical affair, a derangement of circulation, arising from weak action of the heart, and producing effects which, if not checked, must end in a general break-up. I cannot ascertain how long this may take, but I fancy all points to a long and suffering course—the *end*, however, unless averted by prayer, being inevitable. So now, my dear father and brother in Christ, the charity I have to ask is your prayers, that I may be patient, even to the end. I have learnt experimentally during the last month that we need special graces to suffer; courage and endurance are worth so much tinder. Nothing but God's grace supporting us can help us to bear sharp pain. I am *sure* that it is good, and very good, for me to have this pain, and I trust it will squeeze out some bits of pride and sensuality, and teach me to know my own nothingness more and more.

"For the rest, I abandon myself into His hands, that He may do with me according to His good pleasure, so long as He will but help me to love Him perfectly, before I die.—Ever yours affectionately in J. M. D. C.,

"S. M. F. RAPHAEL, O.S.D."

While she was still better, and all the Community were hoping for her recovery, she spoke to a Sister, who had been her intimate friend in old days, of the charming Devonshire scenery they had both so much loved, in the neighbourhood of S. Mary Church. "It was very beautiful," she said; "but I always used to feel the sense of its being so completely outside me: it was *not mine*: I could enjoy it, but I could not seize it and make it mine. But God, the true Beauty, He is *my* God—mine, my very own. I possess His beauty;" and the words, her friend afterwards related, were said with such an accent and look of content, that it suggested to the mind the words, "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear" (Ps. xvi. 15).

The exceeding sweetness of this sense of possessing God as her own, flooded her soul with joy at the very moments when she was suffering excruciating pain, and she used to say, after such attacks, "You will have to put upon my tombstone, 'Drowned in sweetness and in pain.'"

Every one noticed, from the beginning of her illness to the end, how perfectly obedient she was to the least direction of the infirmarian and others who nursed her. When taken to the infirmary room, called "All Saints," she said to herself, "Now I will be obedient." She practised this to the letter throughout her whole illness. One day, for instance, the infirmarian having arranged her pillows, said, "Now, dear Mother, lie there quietly," and then left the room. After a time, she began to suffer great discomfort, and the nurse offered to move her. "No," she replied, "the infirmarian told me to lie still till she returned." She continued to lie thus during the whole night, without changing her position.

But though there was thus a partial recovery, it was not long before acute pain began in the rightfoot, which was declared by the doctors to be the beginning of gangrene, and quite incurable. Mother Francis Raphael insisted on knowing what Dr. Hartley of Stone, and

Dr. Spanton, who came for a consultation, on November 27, had pronounced her illness to be, and she received the news with serene joy. "It is," she said, "as if our Lord had said to me, 'You need not trouble any more about your sins; for now I will see to all that, and give you all that is necessary for expiation, while for you it is only "My God and my All."'"

On December 1, she was consoled by a visit from his Lordship the Bishop of Birmingham, who, hearing with grief the intelligence of her critical condition, came to comfort and give her his blessing.

On the next day, at her own earnest request, Extreme Unction was administered to her, in the presence of the Community. Her desire was to receive that Holy Sacrament while still in the perfect possession of her senses. During its administration, she answered all the prayers herself, and joined in the whole ceremony, with a face radiant with joy and thanksgiving. In speaking afterwards to one of the Sisters, she said, "I could not express how intensely I have longed for Extreme Unction all my Catholic life. It is like the high-tide of the ocean of grace, filling up every nook and cranny." Her upward look of thanksgiving after it was over, filled all who saw her with faith and devotion; and she kept repeating to those who visited her, "I am so proud of my hands, now they have been anointed. Kiss them, and think how holy they are."

But the end was not yet, and the uncertainty how long the illness might last was a severe trial to all; for the pain was very severe and constant, and to see one they so venerated and loved enduring such protracted agony, was acute suffering to all her spiritual daughters, and her many sympathising friends. The only thing that relieved it was the unshaken constancy of her soul, and the sunny cheerfulness with which she bore all. When the paroxysms of pain were at their height, she could not help sometimes crying out aloud; but immediately there was the slightest abatement of agony, a bright smile played once more on her face.

Throughout her illness, she seemed to have a strong conviction that God did not intend to take her to Himself till every fibre of her being had been completely purified from all self-love; and she often expressed this idea in different ways. Once, when the agony was very intense, a Sister who was with her exclaimed, "Oh, dear Mother, it is terrible to see you suffering like this." With a sweet smile, she replied, "Ah, dear child, if you knew all that God is doing in my soul by this suffering, you would not grieve, but rejoice. It is all right, and more than right." And later, when speaking of her longing desire to go to God, she added, "There is too much of nature in it still: we cannot go to God until every morsel of self-love is purged away. When I am perfectly willing to stay here and suffer for years, if He pleases, then He will take me." Only two days before her death, she said, "I do not think I shall die just yet: perhaps I shall go on for a long time, but I am quite willing; I do not mind now; I only want it to be as God pleases."

The general letter which she addressed to her convents from her sick-bed for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception reveals to us the thoughts of her heart during these last months.

"*December* 7, 1893.

"MY DEAREST SISTERS AND CHILDREN IN CHRIST,—I have been accustomed to write a general letter for our great feast of the Immaculate Conception,[1] and I must try to do so now, though it will probably be for the last time. We love this feast in an especial way, because it is like the feast of our espousals to God as a congregation.

"Now, my dearly loved Sisters, I may not have another opportunity of saying to you what fills my own heart to overflowing. We came into this world for one thing only, and that was to give our whole hearts to God. What else is there to love ? He is not the Supreme Good, or the Supreme Beauty, but the only Good and the only Beauty. Think for a moment. If we had a picture, painted by the greatest artist in the world, how soon we should get tired of looking at it ! But to look at God ! When we look at lovely scenery, we long to grasp it and make it our own ; but we can't because we are not made for it. We were made for nothing but God. Poor little worms of the earth as we are, God is *our* God, and nothing else will satisfy us. S. Francis spent a whole night in prayer, saying only the words, ' My God and my All.' And when we are in His presence, there is nothing else to say.

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[1] The anniversary of the profession of Mother Margaret and her first three companions, in 1845; hence considered the birthday of the Congregation, and celebrated by the *Quarant' Ore*.

" You will be making a little heaven on earth in your sanctuaries presently ; our Lord will come there, and dwell with you ; and day and night you will kneel there before Him, and look at Him, and worship Him. What else can you say ? ' My God and my All.' No creature can fill His place ; and till He gets to be our All, our hearts are very empty. But let us make haste, and fill them with God.

" And now, my dearest Sisters, you will not expect a long letter from me ; but I must thank you all for your generous, loving, and fervent prayers. How good you all are to me ! From none of you have I ever had anything but love and goodness. You have made everything sweet and easy to me, and made life here a foretaste of heaven.

" Always keep close together, and live for God and one another, and bear one another's burdens, and seek God in your work, and you will taste of bliss ineffable.

" Pray for me, a poor, unworthy sinner, who loves you dearly in Christ, and is your devoted Mother,

" SISTER MARY FRANCIS RAPHAEL DRANE."

The suffering she endured was not all of the body. Though so calmly resigned to God's will, she went through a season after Easter, which occurred that year on March 25, of acute mental suffering. Fear and depression attacked her; and though these temptations were, in great measure, due to her physical state, they caused her to pass through the valley of the Shadow of Death. She spoke of "phantoms" that terrified and distressed her, and at such dark moments she made intense efforts, in spite of her weakness, to pray. When she was too much exhausted to do so herself, those present used to recite some prayers for her, for which little service she expressed her gratitude in touching words.

One of the Sisters, for instance, cherishes this remembrance: "I was with her one day alone, when suddenly she exclaimed, 'I feel as if the old enemy were coming; do drive him away.' I at once began to recite the Litany of the Holy Name, followed by several of her favourite prayers; and presently a look of sweet peace came over her countenance, and she said, with a joyful smile, 'You don't know how much good you have done me. At such times, nothing but prayer helps me at all. Prayers are like balm on an open wound!'

"One evening," continues the same Sister, "when she had been suffering in this way, we thought, if we left her quite alone for a time, she might perhaps fall asleep. As I was silently watching her, I saw her begin, in her usual way, to make aspirations of contrition and love, with her eyes fixed on a little picture of the Crucifixion she was very fond of, and was holding in her hands. 'O my God,' I heard her say, 'I *do* love Thee. But do I really? I am so impatient. I can bear so little! But Thou art my God, my all. He died for me,' etc. Suddenly, her face lost all expression of pain and anxiety. A look of intense earnestness came into her eyes. She seemed to be gazing fixedly not so much at, as beyond, the picture she was holding. I shall never forget her features at that moment. A little later, she called me to her, and asked if I could realise the intensity of our Lord's love for my own soul. 'No, dear Mother: very little, I am afraid,' was my reply. 'I never did,' she answered, 'until just now, when I was looking at that picture; and then it seemed to me—it must have been imagination, of course—as if He turned His head towards me and looked me in the face. I seemed to see His countenance all covered with blood and wounds; and He looked at me with such an intensely sweet yet sorrowful expression, and yet with such majesty in His eyes, and above all such love. And as He looked at me I realised His love *for me.*' Shortly afterwards, knowing how deeply her loss would be felt, she added, 'Remember that He is the only one worthy of love, to whom you should give your whole heart. Take heed not to seek after or cling to any creature's love: it is nothing; but love Him, and you will need nothing else.'"

"During her illness," writes one who was often with her, "her prayer was continual, and showed plainly what had been the habit of her life. When extraordinary pain came on, so that she was unable to prevent screaming, she would make ejaculations of love and abandonment to God's Will, all the time; and when in pain that was not quite so overwhelming, she would repeat the *Gloria in Excelsis* most fervently. In fact, her favourite ejaculations were those of praise and thanksgiving. The words, 'My God and my All,' were constantly on her lips, and also, 'It is good for me to adhere to my God! What have I in heaven, and what do I desire on earth, but Thee! Nothing. Thou art my All.' The *Credo*, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, S. Bernard's Hymn, and above all, the Rosary, she was never tired of having said by her.

"One of her most favourite devotions was the prayer of S. Ignatius, 'Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given it to me; to Thee, O Lord, I restore it: all is Thine; dispose of it according to Thy Will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me.' 'Enough, certainly,' she would add: 'who could need or desire more?' This prayer was constantly said, during her last illness, by herself, or by those around her. In 1892 she had written, 'I have found a delightful page in Père Olivaint, enlarging the prayer, "*Suscipe*, Take, O Lord, my eyes to be blind, take my ears to be deaf, my limbs to be crippled." S. James, surnamed *Intercisus* (martyred in 421), who was chopped into pieces, said, as each limb was cut off, "O Lord, accept another branch from my tree; it will grow again in spring-time." Here is an ejaculation for deaf ears and crippled limbs.' "

At her request, the Sisters printed on cards, in large letters, her favourite texts, that she might easily read them, as they hung on the curtains before her. First, there was the whole of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, which hung in the middle of her curtain. The other texts were added, as they were suggested, in meditation, to her mind.

The first was, "My God, and My All;" then, "I will espouse thee to Me in faith;" then, "Except the grain of wheat die, itself remaineth alone," etc. (S. John xii. 24); "We shall never find anything more glorious than suffering, for it is by suffering that a soul abandons itself to its Creator." She dearly loved, "Praise the Lord, O my soul; while I live, will I praise the Lord: I will sing to my God, as long as I have my being" (Ps. cxlv. 1). Another favourite, suggested by a Dominican father, was, "I thank Thee, O my God, for doing Thy own Will, in Thy own way, because it is Thy Will." The words of S. Catherine, "I commend to Thee my beloved children, who are as my very soul," were constantly on her lips; but her greatest favourite of all was the text, " It is good for me to adhere to my God, for Thou art the God of my heart ; the God that is my portion for ever " (Ps. lxxii).

The " Alleluia " was put up for her on Holy Saturday. She looked at it wistfully, saying, " What shall I do when it is time for it to come down ? You know the Alleluias won't go on all the year round."—" Dear Mother," was the reply, " perhaps you will be *upstairs* by that time."—" Oh, if only it might be so ! " she exclaimed, while an expression of rapture came over her face. She died, in fact, ere the Paschal season was over, and before the Alleluias had ceased to be sung upon earth, had gone to intone her everlasting Alleluia with the blessed in heaven.

From the time she had received Extreme Unction, the Chaplain, Canon Bathurst, gave her Holy Viaticum, three times a week, and she often spoke of these Communions, with intense joy, as her greatest comfort. " I could not express to you what those Communions are to me. Our Lord gave me half-an-hour of such exquisite happiness this morning that I promised Him, if I had a bad half-hour to go through with my foot, I would willingly accept it."

She often seemed pondering on the mysterious effect of suffering on the soul. " While it lasts," she often said, " one can do nothing but try to bear it, with all the power of the soul. But after it has passed, one feels that it has done a work nothing else could effect ; that it has crushed self, and squeezed out pride and self-love as nothing else could. I feel there is a lot more that must be crushed out of me, and I seemed to see our Lord looking through that slit between the curtains, and saying, ' I must go on till all is purified.' "

Canon Bathurst exhorted her to offer the pain she was suffering for the Catholics of Stone, that they might all make a good Easter Communion, and added, " You will do more good by these pains than you ever did before !" She willingly assented, but said afterwards, laughing, "It is too bad of the Canon. He is making capital out of my poor old foot !"

Her spirit of obedience has been already mentioned. When food was utterly distasteful, she would force herself to take it, if desired. "Must I take it ?" she one day said, when suffering much from sickness. "It will make me sick, I am sure. Never mind, though, if it does; I shall be practising obedience, and that is all I want. Give me an obedience to take it." With regard to medicine ordered by the doctor to relieve the severity of the pain, she once or twice asked for it; but feeling that to be an imperfection, she resolved never to ask for it at all, and to wait till it was given her by others.

It was touching to see her humility of soul, and her gratitude to all who did the smallest service for her, as if she were unworthy of such a favour; and if, after great suffering, she feared she might have been betrayed into any expression of impatience, she would not rest content till she had sent for those who might have heard her, to beg their pardon, with every sign of sincere humility.

As the approaching end drew her nearer to the presence of God, her love of souls and desire to help them increased. "I must love souls," was her expression. "I cannot help it." Speaking of one in whom she had shown great interest, she exclaimed, "I would die to help that soul." Nothing, in fact, afforded her more joy than to think she had been of assistance, either by writing or by word, to some soul.

Throughout her illness, she received many letters of sympathy from friends, relations, and even strangers, all of which touched her with grateful emotion. Old friendships, and the ties of early life, had always kept a loving hold upon her heart, and her affectionate relations with the surviving members of her family were kept up to the end. The brother so often spoken of in the "Memories," whom she so dearly loved, had died in 1892, and his widow had sent Mother Francis Raphael his crucifix. He had had it ever since he was a young man at Cambridge, and his sister valued it as a great treasure. She begged, in this last illness, that it might be laid upon her breast in the coffin, and this wish was reverently carried out.

On December 6, 1893, she received the blessing of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., with the utmost gratitude; and on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, her own special festival, she received also the blessing sent her by the Most Reverend Father-General of the Order of S. Dominic.

But her great desire was to die as a private religious, not in office, as a Superior, in order that she might be once again subject in obedience to another. This was granted. On April 12, 1894, her term of office as Provincial expired. And yet, as one of her intimate friends records, it seemed as if, in spite of this desire, she was allowed, for her greater purification, to feel acutely the pangs of nature in giving up the charge of the spiritual children, "who were to her as her very soul," according to the words of S. Catherine that she loved to repeat.

She had been implored not to resign her office before the natural time arrived, and to this she consented. Another Sister was appointed to transact business in her place, though often consulting her on her bed of suffering. But as the time of release drew near, she wrote the following letter to the convents whose Prioresses were leaving them for the Provincial Chapter, then assembling at Stone:—

"*April* 8, 1894.

"MY VERY DEAR SISTERS,—It is, indeed, a long time since I heard from you, and I write to-day, because I think you may all be feeling a little lonely at Mother

Prioress's departure, and because, seeing that my term of office expires on Thursday, when I cease to have any claim on you all, except on your affection (which, I trust, I may always retain), I want to send you my parting love and blessing. Not that I think myself dying. Far from it. I fear I have to look forward to a very long and very sharp purgation, and I humbly and earnestly implore your prayers to carry me safely through.

"I never thought or dreamed that human beings could suffer what I have suffered this last week. It seemed to pass all comprehension. Our dear Lord must have His own designs: I cannot presume to read them. All I know is, that nothing but your prayers, dear Sisters, can carry me through the purgation I am now enduring, and those prayers I do humbly ask on bended knees.

"For myself, I can only send you your poor old Mother's blessing. How much I have to thank you for —your love, your loyalty, your union of hearts! I know it will be just the same under other Superiors, for it was not given to the individual, but to the office, and your good hearts will yield to each one her due.

"Do your best: whoever is elected, stand round her, and give her your strength, the strength of union. Be loving children, looking to her as to their Mother, and do not doubt but that the grace of real motherhood will be poured out on her, to dispense to you all. For myself, I don't know what lies in store for me: some space of life, I think. If so, be sure it will be given to obedience, so far as I can offer it. Should I live, my only ambition will be to show you an example of loyal and childlike submission to our new Mother, and so contribute what I can to the strength and unity of the congregation.

"So now, dear ones, let us all work together in God, and for God; and may He send you the abundance of all special blessings for time and eternity. Your devoted Mother in Christ, S. M. F. R."

The new Provincial, Mother Agnes Philomena (Dormer), was elected on April 14, 1894; and when thus relieved of her office, a marvellous joy and peace seemed to take possession of Mother Francis Raphael's soul. Though in severe bodily suffering, there was quite a radiant expression on her countenance; and to a Sister who was showing grief, she said, "How can you be sorry, when I am so happy? You don't know how delightful it is to have a Mother again."

She had an interview with all the different members of the Chapter, and assisted them by her counsel; and when the Superiors left Stone to return to their respective convents, she seemed so much revived that some began even to venture to hope that they might see her again.

The infirmarian was unremitting in her loving attentions, and had certainly a docile patient. Even in spiritual matters she was submissive, and would hardly do anything without permission. Her grateful remembrance went back to the friends who had assisted her in literary work, and she would say, "I can't think what made them so kind." Her thoughts used often to turn to the poor, lying in sickness, with few comforts, and perhaps no one to attend to their wants. "There they lie helpless, and I have some one, day and night, to attend to my slightest want. I fear I am more like Dives than Lazarus." She had always great sympathy with the poor.

During the ten days that followed the Provincial Chapter, she continued to take an interest in everything, and begged permission from her new Superior to continue her interest in the novices, "as long as she lived." She felt so much revived indeed, that she even began to speak of partial recovery, and of appearing once more in the choir and garden, and actually set one of the Sisters to translate the Life of S. Richard from the Bollandists, that she might make use of it, if she ever felt strong enough to set to work on her own projected life of that Saint.

Even on these very last days, she made some little sketches of the Dominican Priory of "La Quercia," and other places in Italy, from a book of travels.

An intimate friend, who visited her at this time, was able to enjoy several conversations with her, and said afterwards, that going into her sick-room was like visiting a sanctuary where everything of earth had been put away. "Indeed," she added, "I felt rather as if I were in the presence of a soul in Purgatory than of an ordinary woman. The whole atmosphere seemed to breathe nothing but suffering and love, both for God."

On April 28, however, a decided change took place. The end was evidently approaching. As her sufferings and weakness increased, her aspirations of love and abandonment became more frequent, and she was continually heard saying, "My Jesus mercy ;" "Mary, pray for me ;" "S. Catherine, pray for me ;" "Oh, my God, when wilt Thou take me ?—but I am ready to live till the Judgment Day, if Thou wilt."

She begged to have a little altar prepared in her room, with S. Catherine's Relic on it, and requested that it might be made "as nice as possible."

On the morning of April 28, Canon Bathurst heard her confession for the last time ; and in the evening, she received Holy Viaticum with full consciousness. Afterwards, she spoke to several Sisters, thanking them humbly for all their goodness to her.

Although her weakness was increasing, the doctor still thought she would last through the night ; so it was considered advisable that only the nurses should remain. She lay quietly praying, and at eleven o'clock, after the doctor's last visit, she had her night prayers recited for her, ending with the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, she herself joining aloud with much fervour. Then, for the last time, she said her favourite prayer, "Take, O Lord, and receive," and the Divine Praises, turning, as she finished, quite brightly, to a Sister who had just come in, saying, "We must always say, Blessed be God!"

These were, in fact, her last fully conscious words. Then she lay quietly whispering aspirations, and bowing her head when she heard them say, "My Jesus, mercy."

About 1 A.M. of April 29, she asked, "Is this dying? Will it be long?"

Soon after, she opened her eyes, and fixed them intently on a picture of the Sacred Heart at the foot of the bed, and presently, raising her hand, made a large sign of the Cross. Again she bowed her head when she heard the Holy Name.

Seeing that she was going to breathe her last, the Community was summoned, the prayers for the dying recited, the "*Salve*—Hail, Holy Queen," sung gently by broken voices. As the familiar strain reached her ears, a slight change passed over her face, but there was no sign of pain or struggle.

Then all was still; her spirit had passed away, just as the Superior had said, in rather a loud tone, "Holy Mother, S. Catherine, pray for her."

A remarkable coincidence could not but strike her spiritual daughters. S. Catherine of Siena died on the morning of the Sunday before the Ascension, A.D. 1380, the feast of S. Peter Martyr of the Order of S. Dominic; and her devoted client, Mother Francis Raphael, died also on the morning of the Sunday before the Ascension, on April 29, the festival of the same holy Martyr. May she rest in peace.

"O beauty of the Unseen God!
For Thee alone I sigh;
Thy touch is on the opening woods,
Thy smile upon the sky.

" 'Tis Thou that stirrest in our hearts,
Until they fain would soar
Up to Thy rapturous embrace,
To part from Thee no more.

" Not yet ! not yet ! Wait on, my soul,
For yet another Spring ;
The April Day will come at last,
And all its blossoms bring."
—*Songs in the Night.*

On May 1, the feast of S. Philip and James, Apostles, the funeral took place at Stone, and the body of the venerable Superior was laid to rest in the convent choir, beside the bodies of Mother Margaret and Mother Imelda, already reposing there. The Burial Service was performed by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Birmingham, who deeply deplored the loss sustained by the Church in England by her death.

After the funeral, at which the Very Rev. Father Procter, Provincial, represented the English province of the Dominican Order, there was a dole to the poor of seventy-one loaves of bread, the number corresponding to the years of the deceased religious. This, according to an ancient custom, was distributed at the convent door.

The prayers of all who have derived profit or pleasure from her literary works are asked for the repose of her soul.

" The just shall live for evermore : and their reward is with the Lord " (Wisd. v. 16).

II

EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

I. TO THE VERY REV. CANON WALKER OF SCARBOROUGH

[On the "Life of Mother Margaret."]

"*May* 22, 1869.

"If I understand Mother Margaret's character at all rightly, its greatness and its beauty ought to read a lesson to a good many of the feeble trashinesses of the day. I should say to the world: 'Don't keep on wondering at what she did, but take to heart the principle on which she did it.' I mean the principle of putting God first in everything—His interest and His glory, and of leaning on Him, and not on man. That was her greatness; not her schools and orphanages, but her spirit.

"In her work as a foundress there was the same spirit underlying it all. She did not care to spread her branches widely, half so much as to strike her roots deeply. In an age when every one dins you with talk about this work and that, and would have you place your whole idea of sanctity in a kind of spiritual gallop, Mother Margaret would have been delighted to have exchanged all her active work for one simple soul that was really and truly sanctifying itself interiorly. She verily believed that a few holy 'idiots' (I use the word of course in its spiritual sense) would do more to convert England, than fifty busy women of genius of a lower spiritual level, and her work was the unwearied effort to train saints.

"I fear we do her little credit, but at least we appreciate her lessons. All this put together made up the supernatural, superhuman, unworldly spirit, which is what we feel to be her merit.

"One other thing strikes me as psychologically remarkable,—the power of spirituality to refine. Just read Mother Margaret's letters! What book-learning could have created a more exquisite style? She had none whatever; it was her soul that educated and refined her language.

"I need say nothing about the out and out character of Mother Margaret's Catholicity—it is patent to all. But what was very remarkable was that with all its intensity she never let fall an extravagant epithet. She hated extravagance. And she had no words to express her delight in Dr. Newman. The alliance between those two was the most touching thing you can imagine—the big heart appreciating the big intellect. Her epithets were always reverential. I do not think I have done justice to her habits of *reverence*, they, and their accompanying instincts, were so very remarkable, and she had such a way of teaching reverence. One appreciates this when one has to teach and train the off-hand young ladies of the present period."

[On the "Inner Life of Père Lacordaire," of whose character Canon Walker had expressed an unfavourable opinion.]

"*May*, 1869.

"You will recant your prejudices and be amazed. I detest Lacordaire's politics, and cannot understand his addiction to that line. French liberal Catholics are to me precisely as illogical as Ritualists. Both profess first principles which, carried out, would land them precisely where they decline going. But granting all this, the revelation of Lacordaire as a religious, will make you forgive him his political inconsistencies and wring the tears out of you like a thunder-shower. I could not say what that book made me feel; I believe we spent a week or so in crying over it, and when there was a question of translation, I made known to all whom it concerned that any one but myself should do it at their peril; though I dare say they would have done it much better.

"I must tell you that Père Besson, so often and so honourably mentioned in 'Lacordaire's Life,' was my old director. He made me a Dominican. I am not given to credit marvels very easily, but I *could* not doubt that he had many supernatural gifts. If I am sure of anything it is, that I once saw him in a rapture during Mass. His life was that of one of the old saints. He slept in a coffin full of ashes, and was found there with the Roman fever on him by one of the Pope's Monsignori. His face was transparent. I should never stop if I were to say all I could say about him."

[Canon Walker, however, still held to his opinion, after beginning the "Inner Life." And a few days later she writes again.]

"*May* 26, 1869.

"What a hopeless John Bull you are! But I do not give in yet. Wait till you have read the 14th Chapter, and if you do not own Lacordaire 'no vulgar boy' and no vulgar soul—why, I shall say that the doctor was right and you must have got the gout.

"Of course French souls express themselves differently from English ones. But *he* had something of the Englishman about him, in his reserve and his exterior coldness that covered a heart of fire. He was not Vesuvius, but Etna, as a Frenchwoman said of a certain friend of ours. He had a great deal of Newman in him, both in his character and his fate, and Newman is aware of it and feels it.

"Well, it will be grand to convert you. Of course I have to wink at Gallicisms of *form*. Say what you like of poor England, I prefer her genuine character, her language, her poetry, her scenery, and her form of sanctity (when you can get it ; it is a rare bird) to any others under the sun.

"But when you find a heart so generously in love with Almighty God as Lacordaire's, I can forgive everything and forget everything in admiration of it. I impatiently await your recantation."

II. TO THE PRIORESS OF S. BENEDICT'S, COLWICH

[A very close and intimate correspondence was kept up between the venerable Prioress of S. Benedict's Priory, Colwich, Mother Francis Magdalen Taunton, and Mother Francis Raphael, a few extracts from which we have been allowed to make. One of the earliest is written towards the close of Mother Margaret's long illness.]

"*April* 26, 1868.

"These last days are inexpressibly precious to us. Not that we see her much: indeed, after she spoke to us all together on Friday, and gave us her blessing, we felt it as her last farewell, and hardly dare intrude on the silence of the chamber in which she is passing away to God. She told us in a few words, spoken in a feeble voice, to work for God alone, and that which has been her motto through life remained her teaching to the last.

"I am amazed to see how we all bear it, and cannot help feeling that the calm, and if I may so say, the *sweetness* of this long death week, is the effect of those many prayers offered for us by others: by yourselves, and so many charitable friends.

"The last words I heard her saying, in the midst of her pain, were: 'All goodness, all bounty, all love!' And in the middle of the night, not being able to lay her hand upon her Rosary and Crucifix, she said, 'Where is my Crucified Love?'

"The Bishop is here and remains as long as he can. I think he feels it as much as ourselves."

[After Mother Margaret's death she writes.]

"*May* 11, 1868.

"Indeed we do thank God in the midst of our tears, for having given us this great and noble soul, for as long as He saw fit, and now, as we doubt not, having called her to *Himself*—the only reward she ever desired. The sufferings, to witness which have so harrowed our hearts for the last six months, we shall be able now to think of as the worthy crown of her noble life, the means, as we must believe, of hastening her union with her Divine Spouse. I am sure she will be our Mother in heaven, and I own I did invoke her as I saw her parting look, and begged her to obtain for each of us the one grace we all most needed.

" As one of our Sisters said, it seems as if we had done with time and got into Eternity. And so it does. I cannot realise that the last week has only had seven days in it."

[On her own election as Prioress Provincial, after the death of Mother Imelda Poole.]

" *Dec.* 1, 1881.

" You so well understand what the trial of this time must be to me, that I need not say much about it. Every other feeling has been swallowed up in my heart in the one thought of her, whose loss alone has brought on me this immense change. No one can ever imagine what she was to me, and yet this seems a selfish thing to say, when I know how much she was to all her children. But during these last ten years, union in work, union in daily and hourly intercourse, have made up such entire union of soul, as I did not think was possible in this poor world. For somehow (and I thank God for it), it was so entirely in Him, that now she is gone, I do not feel, as some would suppose, desolate and broken, only that she has gone to heaven, and that on earth her place is empty.

" My comfort must be in adhering to the Will of God, and accepting my present responsibilities, as the expression of that Will."

[On her recovery from a bad illness.]

"*June* 11, 1890.

"Oh, how good it has all been for me! It did seem to bring God so near me. I would not have been without those dear, long, sleepless nights for the whole world, and the pain, too, was so very good. . . .

"The erysipelas has affected the eyes, so that I cannot read, and ought not to write—so there was nothing left but to *sing;* and that I did.

"Now, my dear Mother, I must say no more, except to ask you to thank God with me for all His goodness, and beg Him that I may begin a new life, and serve Him a little bit better."

[Mother Francis Raphael was strongly urged by many persons, and among them the venerable Prioress of S. Benedict's, to write the biography of Bishop Ullathorne after his death. The following letter not only explains the reason of her refusal, but illustrates the spirit in which her literary works were performed.]

"*Oct.* 22, 1890.

"You see, I consider the whole matter of a *nun* employing herself in literary pursuits an exceptional case. I have done it under obedience, and always encouraged rather than discouraged by my Superiors, emphatically by our dear Archbishop, who was my only director. But unless so encouraged, I should have felt doubts as to its suitability. Anyhow the subjects to be written about cannot but enter into the question. Again and again have I been solicited to write on subjects of general literature, and always have refused, and always shall. For writing on such subjects as the Life of S. Catherine, the studies requisite do but necessitate a deeper knowledge and familiarity with authorities of a purely spiritual kind. To study the works of S. Catherine for instance, is to drink of the very fountain-head of Dominican spiritual teaching. So far from one's religious spirit suffering *loss* from such studies, it is refreshed and invigorated. I may say the same of the Life of S. Dominic, on which I am now engaged. But when you come to writing the biography of a Bishop of our own time, you have to deal with a variety of subjects, political, social, and I know not what. You would have to read correspondences on diocesan matters, and state views about such things, which would commit you to a course of interests, to my thinking, altogether outside the proper sphere of a nun. At least, you must either treat these matters (and contemporary matters are far more difficult to be accurate about, than when you write from historical monuments), or you must leave them out, and if you do, your ' Life ' is imperfect.

" That is one thing. The second is, you have to make an appreciation of character. Now how can you do that of your Father ?

" In writing the dear Archbishop's Life, I feel I should have to deal with, study, and pass judgment on a variety of subjects which are altogether foreign to what I consider suitable matters for me as a woman and a religious to concern myself with. I would as soon turn editor of a newspaper.

" No, believe me, this is a matter where we may trust a certain *instinct*, which guides one in things difficult to distinguish in words. I think what I shall content myself with doing, is editing certain portions of the Archbishop's Autobiography, leaving out all that might raise questions and cavillings, and this probably I shall do, and nothing more. I have opened my mind on the subject, to those of my own Sisters whose spiritual instinct I can best trust, and I find them entirely of my mind, and I attach more weight to their judgment on such a matter, than I do to the views of outsiders."

[On the receipt of a manuscript on Prayer by Dame Catherine Gascoigne, O.S.B., Abbess of Cambrai about 1660, lent to Mother Francis Raphael from S. Benedict's.]

"*Nov.* 23, 1890.

"I feel your kindness in having this copied for me more than I can say, and it will have many a careful reading. It is, indeed, wonderfully beautiful, and one feels how surely such a method of prayer must lead to great interior perfection, as well as peace.

"In what she says of the adherence of the will to the Will of God, she is speaking the language of S. Catherine, who places all our perfection in that one exercise. Nothing, surely, can lead a soul more directly to God, while there is a simplicity and humility in it, which must be a safeguard against delusion. At the same time I note with pleasure what you say about the importance of having memory and understanding well stored with the material for meditation in the time of need.

"Altogether, dear Mother, your letter is a real help to me, in instructing the novice mistress as to the proper course to take with beginners. I have always pressed the necessity of their mastering a simple method of meditation, even if, later on, they should be attracted to a different kind of mental prayer; lest, for want of this to fall back on, they spend the time of prayer in idleness and vacuity. And, moreover, it seems to me that to have once acquired the habit of digesting the truths of Faith in meditation must facilitate their eliciting therefrom affections and aspirations.

"There is another reason why, with us, a certain employment of the understanding in prayer is very desirable. Those who are engaged in teaching (as many of us are), are obliged to use their understanding on a variety of subjects more or less secular; and so it is doubly necessary to spiritualise that same faculty by exercising it on the life of our Lord, or the Divine attributes. I don't succeed in getting all to feel this necessity, but provided the time of prayer is really spent in prayer, I am content."

[On the spirit of S. Benedict.]

"*May* 29, 1891.

" . . . Do you not think, dear Mother, that just because the fashion of the world is changing so much, it is an unspeakable blessing that our Lord should provide us in communities like yours with monuments of the older spirit—real methods full of 'the lore of olden times'—devised before the spirit of hurry-skurry took possession of everything, and intellectual culture run mad threatened to sweep away the very landmarks of interior life.

"To preserve the fragrance of that ancient spirit intact, seems to me just the sacred privilege and duty of your institute, and precisely that which makes it so precious to the Church. Not but that I can readily imagine, as you receive younger members, trained in a very different manner from that of the last generation, you find a change, and wants existing in them which did not exist in the postulants of sixty years ago. And the question how to deal with these without in any degree sacrificing the spirit of your community, must give you many anxious thoughts. But the big broad rule of S. Benedict must furnish you with the necessary light.

"What I see in many souls, I may say most nowadays, is what I can only describe as the necessity of having an interest. Our life, of course, furnishes interest to those who are engaged in active duties, to any amount; but what I find it difficult to make all see, is, that in reality there is no interest like the spiritual life itself, if we did but give ourselves to it *con amore.* Weak health and a variety of obstacles necessarily prevent a certain number from taking part in active work, and when this is so, there are some, though I am bound to say not the majority, who feel the void, but who never need, or would feel it, did they realise how far greater Almighty God Himself is, as our Object, filling heart and mind and every human faculty, than any exterior work, however excellent. Still, where the want is felt, I suppose it is part of the duty of government to supply it in a safe measure by giving occupation which will engage the interest without destroying recollection.

"*November* 26, 1891.

"I want to beg your prayers much to help me with this volume of 'Letters.' [The letters of Archbishop Ullathorne, on which she was then engaged.] I think they will surprise and edify many readers, who only partially guess at the interior spirit of our dear Bishop. I am going through them year by year, and it recalls the early days, when he took so much pains to form and instruct the community. If only we could keep alive that spirit of humility and generosity he laboured so hard to inspire!"

[On receiving the news of her correspondent's recovery from a severe illness.]

"*February* 1, 1892.

"How can I say how fervently I have thanked our Lord for the good news that reached me this morning! I am not sure that you will quite join in the joy of all your children at having a longer lease of this poor life. Possibly you may feel like one who has got another term of imprisonment, after you thought you were going to be released. But no! You will like our dearest Lord's Will best, and resign yourself to do a little more for Him.

"Oh! How good God is; and how well one learns that lesson in times of sickness! That little tiny bit of illness I had two years ago seemed to teach me more about Him in a month, than I had learnt in sixty years! I suppose we get nearer to Him, for He certainly touches the soul at those times as at no other."

"*Feb.* 25, 1892.

"I have almost finished the volume of [Archbishop Ullathorne's] 'Correspondence,' and by the time it is out, you will be able to read it, and, as I hope and believe, with pleasure. Some who have seen the letters collected are amazed at the depth of spiritual teaching in some of them. What a loss it is out of one's life, no one can say—and what a grace it was to have had that direction so long!"

"*Feb.* 14, 1893.

"The Bishop and Mother Margaret had such a power of planting *principles*. I don't know whether I shall be able to do it, but I have often thought it would be very useful to compile a little collection of maxims from the dear Bishop's writings; just those into which he put the pith of his spiritual instructions; like those Maxims of S. Vincent of Paul, that one can make one's daily bread. So often, I find myself recurring to one or other of his words, or Mother Margaret's, and feel how much their influence did for the souls they trained.

"Do pray for us, dear Mother, that we may never fall away from the standard they gave us."

[On the death of Mother Agnes Jerningham, Abbess of Taunton.]

"*April* 1893.

"What a noble end of a noble life it is! Eighty-four years of life; forty-five of government, and such government as hers has been! Truly she will leave behind her a venerable memory!"

III. EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO AN INTIMATE FRIEND

[These letters range over a period of about twelve years, and begin in the autumn of 1881, when her correspondent had been reading the "History of Saint Catherine of Siena."]

"STONE, *Sept.* 30, 1881.

"I am so glad you like S. Catherine, and that you approve of the plan I proposed to myself for making her a real woman. I don't think it could be carried out in the case of any other saint, because you would not have the same materials; but having so many of her letters, as well as the correspondence of her friends and disciples, made the reconstruction of her real human character a possibility. I do not think one can imagine such a group of well-contrasted characters as those of her friends—Neri and Stephen, Christopher and Malevolti, the commonplace, tiresome old mother, with her inspired genius of a daughter. If one were trying to write a novel, could one arrange a more striking group?"

[After the death of Mother Mary Imelda Poole, in the October of that same year, she writes.]

"STONE, *November* 7, 1881.

"Thank you for your affectionate letter. . . . As for myself, I have gone through so much that it seems to me there can be nothing worse to go through—nothing, at any rate, that I could feel as worse. I only hope the successive blows are like those of the sculptor, who fashions his block of stone into shape, and not like those of the road-mender, who merely knocks his to bits.

"If weather permits, Cardinal Newman will be here on Thursday. It is extraordinarily kind of him, and I only hope there may be no fog, and that we shall not have the credit of killing him. His visit will be a memorable one for us.

"I am beginning to sleep again. For a fortnight after the dreadful night (of Mother Imelda's death), I am not conscious of having slept, except for one hour, in a chair. But, thank God, in spite of all, I am well, and able to do my work."

"*December* 9, 1881.

"Thank you so much for being sorry for me, instead of sending me the odious 'congratulations' which everybody else does. I wonder what cause of congratulation they can see in having to fill a responsible office [that of Prioress-Provincial, to which she had just been elected], and to take the empty place of the being one loved best in the world! If you knew *how* empty it is! Everything recalling her, and reminding me that, as it were but yesterday, we were living and working here side by side. Yet I cannot say I was really unprepared. She had been quietly stealing away from us during the past year, and, I am sure, was conscious of it herself, so many things now show it. She departed as gently and hiddenly as she lived. I could never tell you what a lovely soul it was!

"I comfort myself with thanking God for the long possession of such a treasure, and I know it was her wish that I should be where I am, so for that reason it shall be my wish."

"*January* 25, 1882.

"I own to feeling (mentally) our great loss far more now than I did at the time. Partly the being stunned by it, and partly the necessity of exertion, distracted me, and prevented my dwelling on my own personal loss; but as time goes on I feel it more and more. I am sure you will understand me when I say that with many ties, and many affections even, some, and only a few, are what the French call *intime*.

"Don't think I repine, or let myself be depressed.

Friendship in God is too sweet, and too eternal to admit of that; but I am learning that awful change which the world puts on when what one loves has gone out of the world, and one has to cast one's whole self upon God and duty. I believe it is the best and grandest preparation of soul for one's own last change that one can desire. But for all that, it is a terrible experience.

"About the photograph. I think it must have been the one taken after death that I promised. I enclose it now. It is not as like as you would wish, and does not give the idea of the beauty of that dear face, in its last repose; but it is the last, and so I value it.

"My only brother, and a very good one to me, is failing in health, and losing his eyesight, which is a sad affliction to one who has found all his occupation in writing, reading, painting, and using his eyes.

"As I read the verses you quoted, I said to myself: 'How like the old mystery-verses!' and I suppose I guessed aright. There is a wonderful fund of poetry in the old religious verses of England. If you have not seen Father Bridgett's last book on the Holy Eucharist in England, you ought to do so. It is wonderfully beautiful."

"*June* 5, 1882.

"I am not the least in the world depressed, or weary, or out of heart, but everything that gave zest to life, in the sense of enjoyment, was buried last October. And yet I am perfectly satisfied, and would not have it otherwise for the whole world. It would take me a quire of letter-paper to explain what I mean, and perhaps I do not fully understand it myself. I am only conscious that half my life died with her; and that, all the same, there was, with the immense loss, an immense gain of some sort, but what, I hardly know. So there is a problem of psychology for you to solve! I never was happier in one way, or more utterly desolate in another, so that the very buttercups seem to have all meaning gone out of them. Yet I have an intense certainty and consciousness that it is all right."

"STONE, *June* 23, 1882.

"What you say about 'sacrifice' is very sweet and encouraging. Certainly there is a wonderful attraction in the very idea of sacrifice. No doubt our Divine Lord felt it in His human heart. I remember all last year being haunted by an almost ridiculous idea: how it would be to be able to put everybody one loved safe into heaven, and stand outside one's self, and look at them enjoying themselves! Would one be content? And it seemed to me that, provided one had had one's share in getting them there—yes. Of course, provided also, that one's 'outside place' was not precisely your definition of Limbo, but only an ideal, an impossible condition of soul; innocent, but unrewarded. You see I am paying you back your 'follies' in kind!

"I must just add that I think your simile about the mountain top and the mountain air so beautiful, that if I was not so heavy and stupid, I would write a poem on it. It is also so apt and true."[1]

"*July* 8, 1882.

"I shall be interested to see how you carry out your 'modernising.' I tried my hand, some years back, on the First Book of 'The Court of Sapience,' and should have done the second, if I could have got a copy of it; so I know something of the problem one has to solve.

"I am glad you like Madame Swetchine. If you don't know all her writings, we have them, and probably they would interest you. I have just finished, and been enchanted with Monsignor de Ségur's Life. He was one of those people in whom perfection by grace is planted upon natural perfection—like our dearest Mother Imelda. They are rare beings, but, when found, who can resist the charm of them?"

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[1] She did afterwards use this idea to some extent in the poem of "The Mountain Summit."

"*July* 15, 1882.

"Nature and grace is a large subject, certainly; one easier to understand in the concrete than in the abstract. I mean, examples show what is meant better than theories. Compare such a character as Père de Ravignan, on whom nature bestowed an abominable temper, one which was the cross of himself and everybody he lived with, and such a one as Monsignor de Ségur, or our own beloved Mother Imelda, whose temper was, naturally, a sort of serene blue sky in May. And not only in temper, but in other things Monsignor de Ségur was a bundle of natural gifts—so graceful, so charming, so accomplished. Now, leave these two men *alone*, and let both follow their nature, and nothing but nature, and the one would have been the plague of every one who knew him, while the other could hardly have resisted the temptations of the world, and of making himself its idol. But grace came and took possession of them, and both gave themselves entirely to God. It would be difficult to say which had the most merit in their very different tasks; but, beyond all doubt, the one who was naturally charming became still more so by grace, and that mingling of the two excellences must have given him an attraction which the other could never have possessed, though he was very likely sanctified by his resistance to his difficult nature. I don't think the question is really difficult, if you bear in mind that grace is the *super*natural excellence; the excellence which comes from overcoming nature, not from following it.

"Your description of the Cardinal" (Newman) "was charming, and satisfied me. He is, as you say, *a soul*; so much of a soul that you understand in him that the body is a mere vehicle of the nobler part. But how much of that may not be, and probably is, the result of that severe providential discipline of which we were speaking; things which, in themselves, we are idiotic enough to regret: 'the potter's wheel,' which has certainly fashioned him to a noble shape.

"Yes; we have had 'Rabbi Ben Ezra;' but, do you know, N—— herself did not fully comprehend it, and on concluding, we agreed to make a summary of 'the general meaning,' namely, that we should live our lives and be good children, and make the best of circumstances; but as to separate lines and verses—we had rather not analyse them!

"Then we have read a very nice 'Life of Cicero,' and some 'Essays' of Carlyle, and are going to read some more of the latter, which start subjects one likes to think about. But I am afraid our studies are not severe, nor are they intended to be."

"STONE, *Sept.* 19, 1882.

"The Bishop has just published his second book, dedicated to us, and all about humility, which makes one ashamed, but which means that we want that *sine quâ non* rather specially.

"Of course, you are charmed with the 'Confessions,' and for the same reason as with S. Teresa. Don't you believe that, if we could get the real history of any life, and the real unveiling of any soul, it would have a charm no other sort of book could ever have? Not every soul is a S. Augustin or a S. Teresa, but I believe that if we could get at the real history of any of the Toms and Harrys, the Marys and Janes of ordinary life—their inside history, I mean—it would be much the same; because, whenever you get the real history of a soul, you come in contact with God and His dealings with it; so that, however ordinary the soul, you always meet with the Divine.

"The best thing you can do for—— is to get her to see the share the *will* has in faith or no faith. It is not all understanding. Set her on that track, and you may find something may come of it. I have often heard people pity themselves because of the suffering of unbelief, as if it were something they could not help; but they do not seem aware how large an element the will has in believing, or not believing.

"Of course you have heard of poor Dr. Pusey's death. His day was gone by; still, it makes a great hole in the memories of the past."

"*Oct.* 17, 1882.

"I see that I shall have to send you a small treatise, in reply to your extensive inquiries about everything. What a thing it is to have friends of inquiring minds, specially when you feel bound in conscience to reply to them!

"First of all, then, about Dionysius the Areopagite. It is certain (of course) that he existed. According to the early Greek Church historians, he became first Bishop of Athens; but then comes a dual tradition. One says he was martyred at Athens, about the year A.D. 95. Another (the popular one) says he went to Gaul and became the apostle of that country, and was martyred at Paris, about the year 119. Whether or no the 'Acts' of this martyrdom are authentic is one of the many controversies of ecclesiastical history. Some people say there was but one S. Denys, and others that there were two, and that the history of the two (both true histories) have been jumbled up into one. But I am bound to say that the chief authority for splitting S. Denys into two are the Jansenists, who laid violent hands on so many Church traditions, which, up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, had never been doubted.

"The second controversy about him regards the writings 'attributed to S. Denys.' Professor —— should be made to fast for a month on water-gruel for telling you such rubbish! But somehow, Protestants, when they touch Catholic history, fall under a fatalism of fibs. The writings in question are perfectly authentic, and form the basis of all mystical theology. No one, I suppose, has ever questioned their doctrine. The only question is: Who wrote them? Tradition always attributed them to S. Denys, but critics say the style belongs rather to the fifth than the second century. It is a question on which people take different sides, and is not considered to be settled either way.

"The Jansenists did all they could to discredit these writings, because their doctrine was strongly opposed to the Jansenist errors, particularly on grace. But they remain what they always have been, the earliest authority for mystical theology, and S. Thomas based much of his teaching on S. Denys. All your favourite 'Bail' is taken from him.

"Now about Scotus Erigena. He was beyond his age as a scholar, and specially as a Greek scholar, and he translated S. Denys from the Greek. But though a great scholar, he was a most superficial theologian and philosopher, and, *de plus*, a conceited fellow, and showed it by taking up every individual heresy afloat in his time, and what we should now call 'sporting' them. He was always taking part in controversy, and always making a mess of it. And in his translation of S. Denys his ignorance of theology led him into making S. Denys talk heresy, and it was this that Pope Nicholas complained of. The heresies in the translation were not S. Denys's, but Erigena's.

"Water-gruel is not bad enough for your Professor, for saying that 'S. Denys had better have been left harmless in Greek'! And I should say he has made an awful blunder in saying that Erigena translated him into *Anglo-Saxon!!* He did the translation at the request of Charles the Bald, and as he was himself an Irishman, an 'Anglo-Saxon' translation would indeed have been a queer thing! But, in fact, the translation would have been into Latin, the only literary language that would have been acknowledged at the court of Charles the Bald. There is no English translation, but a French one, by a man whose name I forget, but will look up, and which is the only medium through which I know S. Denys. I believe it is pretty good, but of course no translation would be thought to do justice to the Greek original.

"So much about S. Denys.

"Bail's *Théologie Affective* is a grand book; I am so glad you have got it. Read the treatise 'On God,' and, again, that 'On Beatitude'; and, in fact, all of it. The first volume, on God and the Angels, was to me (and I was only just a Catholic when I read it) like an entirely new conversion. *I felt I had never known who God was before.* I don't suppose that Bail was anything special, but it was the first book that put before me the real teaching of the Church on those things, and I saw how Protestants have nothing but vague notions, where Catholics have precise dogmas.

"Of course, if that idea about spirits was new to you, it would be a great revelation. But don't you see that the real truth is that angels and glorified spirits see only, and love only God—in Himself—and us, in Him. They are absorbed in the Vision of God! This is what makes their love for us so perfect, that it cannot be out of Him. They only see, remember, and are conscious of us, in so far as, seeing Him, they see all things; and so far as He permits. And He has His reserves. He does not lay our interior open to the unlimited investigations of all spirits, good and evil. They know only as much as He permits. It makes our friendship with the angels and with our own departed ones just what the perfection of friendship must be—a tie, whose strength and very existence is derived from the fact that it is *in God.*

"The two books I spoke of were: 1. *Études Philosophiques,* by Auguste Nicholas, 4 vols. I greatly recommend them to you; you would be simply entranced by them. And 2. the preface to Möhler's 'Life of S. Athanasius,' which also I only know through a French translation, not possessing German enough to read it in the original. It gives a masterly summary of all the ante-Nicene writings on the Divinity of our Lord."

" *Oct.* 27, 1882.

"I am not re-writing 'Utopia,' but I am beginning another story, and writing it more carefully. So prepare your criticisms !

"I beg to make my apologies to Professor——, but after what Henry Hallam said of 'Thomas Aquinas' (that he believed one other Englishman besides himself, perhaps, had 'looked into him,') I think I am justified in saying that English men of letters do display extraordinary ignorance when they speak of Catholic theologians."

" *Dec.* 20, 1882.

. . . "Now, about my story. I have finished it, and they have read it aloud in the community room, and been much interested in it ; which, however, is no test, as they would be interested in 'Jack and the Beanstalk,' if I had written it ! Burns tells me there would be a very good sale for some stories, and I am thinking of trying an experiment with one or two, but I fear the selling element would be a bit of spice which I could not supply.

"The Poor Schools passed an excellent examination, and we are now having a 'creature,' who comes once a week to teach us all the Kindergarten system, which has some good in it, added to a large proportion of humbug ; but as Her Majesty's Government requires it now, we have to bow our necks and learn."

" *Feb.* 1883.

"Many thanks for your letter. I have got your 'treatise' all safe, and hope to turn over a new leaf in consequence of having read it, and never to 'commence' anything again, at any rate within arm's reach of your ink-horn ! [1]

"When I recommended Monsignor de Ségur to you, I quite forgot his royalist, and your democratic proclivities ; though I don't think it would have made any difference in my recommendation. I fancy good people must agree to regard each other's political views as something to be tolerated and put on one side, in the judgment we form of character. Not but that they do enter into and influence character a good deal, but so long as the world lasts, the differences which produce differences of opinion must and will exist, and evidently do not hinder souls from serving God, though in opposite political camps. Monsignor de Ségur's legitimism is to you what Lacordaire's liberalism is to me, a point where sympathy fails ; so we just block it off from our view of the character.

"But one thing I do in my secret soul believe, viz., that there are about nine-tenths, in all party separations, which are more separations of name than reality. For instance, when you call yourself a democrat, you mean chiefly, I presume, that you have a great feeling for the people, and a great feeling of their enormous sufferings. In that, I would not yield to you one inch, I am sure ; no one with a grain of sense could think otherwise than that, whether we admire this nineteenth century of ours, or not, here it is, with its problem of starving millions, and that to suppose it does not demand a kind of legislature, different from what was needed in the middle ages, is an absurdity. But one may admit that, and even were one such a man as my 'Duke,' might devote one's whole life to the service of the people, and yet not hold that the sweeping away of privileged classes, and putting one's self into the hands of Caucuses, and creatures like A and B, would be the best remedy. I mean one may feel for the people, and yet detest a certain element in Radicalism, as heartily as a good Tory does.

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[1] This refers to an amusing literary discussion between Mother Francis Raphael and her correspondent on the subject of the word "commence," to the use of which the latter had objected, on the ground of its Latin origin and want of force, compared to its Anglo-Saxon equivalent "begin."

"So, again, if I said I hated 'liberal principles,' I should not mean that I hated freedom; rather the reverse; for, as far as I can see, the final outcome of liberal opinions is the destruction of freedom. So-called 'liberal' principles have triumphed in France, and resulted in the loss of every one of those things for which, Lacordaire and Montalembert contended; especially in the loss of freedom of education. So that it seems to me that very often good people really love and really hate the same things in essence, whilst they are squabbling over party names.

"Yes, I have read Cardinal Newman's paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, and I think it is very good and very useful. As far as the subject has been explained to me by others, it agrees with his statements, which show that, in point of fact, the Church, in her view of inspiration, is far more elastic than 'orthodox Protestantism.'

"I have not been able to do much to my story; in fact, I see my way to no sort of plot; only to three characters, whom, if I had some sort of rag of a story to join them to, I could draw. I never like disagreeing with my critics, but I do disagree with N——, as to the length of my stories; for, in the first place, I could never sustain the action through three volumes, and in the second place, I don't aim at pitting myself against any of the three-volume writers; but rather at supplying a little more thoughtful or less trashy matter than is supplied by the other cheap small storybooks, which abound *ad nauseam* in our Catholic atmosphere; in which the hero and heroine, after making fierce love to one another for a good space, relatively become a priest and a nun!

"I really could not get up an out-and-out plot, such as novelists demand, if it were to save my life; nor do I think any story would live through three vols., if it had not a much stronger tincture of human passion than I should care to undertake.

"I have been having a musical week! what do you think of that? Only plain chant, which perhaps is not in your style!"

"STONE, *April* 1884.

"I suppose you know the very precarious state in which dear Canon Estcourt lies. I hear that the Bishop was going to see him yesterday, and give him the last blessing, and I should not be surprised, at any moment, to hear of his departure; which will be to us that of a kind old friend, and, in many ways, a benefactor. He has often helped me most generously with books which I could not otherwise have procured, and is associated with our very early days, and with dear Mother Imelda."

"S. MARY CHURCH, *July* 8, 1884.

"I quite agree that second-hand messages are good enough for such correspondents as myself, and, in fact, I do not consider myself to deserve to be called a correspondent: but I fear I am past reclaiming or reforming; so you must look on me as affording you an occasion for practising magnanimity!

. . . . . .

"I should like to tell you a little about our work at Bow, which I hope is growing, and going to grow into something more; what, we can hardly say; but certainly it is reaching a lot of poor souls who, till now, have had no one to care for them, and who show themselves responsive to anything that is done for them. Which is the greatest power in the world, do you think, steam, electricity, or sympathy? I incline to the latter. With it, I believe one might do almost anything with souls.

"If you ever go to Bow, you must get N—— to tell you all about our 'Bow Common-ers' We have opened a sort of Instruction-room there, and made it as pretty and attractive as we can ; and the result has been that a good number of heathens have been baptized, and are doing well. When I say 'heathens,' I mean real unmistakable heathens, who had never learnt a word of religion, or said a prayer, or crossed the threshold of a church in all their lives. It would be nice to feel one had begun what would certainly go on saving souls, after we had departed. The sad part of all good works always seems to me the way in which they so often flourish only like the grass of the field, and disappear when the hand that planted them is gone."

"*Oct.* 6, 1884.

"All my plans are in suspense owing to the severe illness of our dear Bishop, which is causing me an anguish of anxiety. I fear the case is a very bad one ; as bad, in fact, as can be. . . .

"Of course, God will give the strength. He always does. And of course, and above all, His Blessed Will is better than anything else that can be desired or imagined. I do not forget this ; and you must pray for me, that I may never forget it for a single instant, but just at this moment, I do feel on the rack."

"*Oct.* 9, 1884.

"Thank God, the dear Bishop is better, and we have every reason to hope in a fair way of recovery. It is nothing short of a miracle, for on Sunday he was considered in imminent danger, and I don't fancy the doctor had the least hope. The prayers offered for him on Sunday—Rosaries, of course—were something on a colossal scale.

"What I have gone through since last Thursday, I could not put into words. But God is *too* good !"

"*Jan.* 7, 1885.

"I wish I could assist N——. Poor soul! I fear the course we are all running will breed many such 'creedless' and disjointed beings. And we don't know what to do for them. It is a new phase of feminine life, and has not yet been provided for.

"What a tremendous and *consistent* democrat you are, even on a postcard! I underline 'consistent,' because everybody is *not*. No, I confess it did not strike me that Tennyson had made a goose of himself, in accepting a peerage. Not that I particularly admired him for doing it, but I really don't see why genius should not be ennobled, as well as bravery. Not that peerage-giving in either case is the old and sound idea of an aristocracy; but as to developing what I believe *is*—ropes would not make me do it, lest I should cause a volcano to burst out in your brain! Well, we are rapidly flying on to the time when all these ideas will be effaced from the English mind, in the new social and political condition of affairs which is coming upon us. Fifty years hence the Tennyson of the twentieth century will look back and open the eyes of the then England to all it has lost, and win his laureateship, (but not his peerage—for there will be no such thing existing) for singing sweetly his dirge of the past. That is to say, if any England remains to care about sweet singing; which I doubt!

"Will you please to find out and tell me what is, and who wrote, 'O world, O life, O time!' which I see quoted in Mr. Saintsbury's monograph on Dryden, in the 'Men of Letters,' as one of *the* modern poetical morsels—but I don't seem to know it. The others he alludes to of course I know, and I have a notion I should like to know 'O world, O life, O time!'"

"If a fairy asked me what I should best like to be (next to being a saint, and in quite a different order of wishes), I should say—a poet. Because I believe poets are the great powers, and stamp ideas on their age. So do saints. But what saints do in one order, poets do in another. To be both would be splendid ! I wonder if it would be possible ! "

" *Jan.* 15, 1885.

" I have seen N——. What she wants, and what should have been given her, as the basis of the religious system, is God Himself. I wish I could say how strongly I feel about this. People cram poor souls with the Church, and the Seven Sacraments, and Infallibility, and Our Lady, and the ascetic life, when what they really want all the time is the foundation-stone, *Credo in Deum.*

" Thanks for the verses, which I remembered as soon as I read them. Very beautiful ; and if I chose to shut out my spiritual sense, and call out of its cave my simply naturalistic sense, I could flow into his ' No more, oh, never more ! ' pretty easily. For to flesh and blood at sixty, when one has survived one's dearest ones, and survived one's self also, the October and November of life are sad enough ; and when I come here [she writes from S. Mary Church] to the scenes of my youth, and look at the sea, and the downs, and remember the days, ' when dewy turf was air to wingèd feet,' I could wail and lament as loud as any. But the gain of life is so infinitely beyond its losses that I send my nature back to its cave, and repeat, ' Rejoice in the Lord *always*, and again I say, rejoice.'

" What in the world have I said, done, or left undone, on the subject of Shelley, for you to quarrel about ? I think he was a glorious poet, and about the meanest and most selfish of men. That is what is so disappointing—that a man can be so inspired, and at the same time, so debased."

" *Aug.* 28, 1885.

" Our functions at Stoke [the consecration of the Church, and opening of the new choir] went off splendidly. Consecration on Wednesday, the 19th. Such a splendid ceremony, lasting five hours, and ending with a Pontifical High Mass; but it felt like ten minutes!

"After dinner we took possession of the choir by singing Vespers of the Dedication, and then all hands to work for the opening next day. It looked lovely. The little sanctuary is so lofty, and the high altar in it so perfectly proportioned that you don't notice its smallness. Then the choir is divided from it by an exquisite carved-oak screen, and there are some tolerable windows—all angels. Choir small, but very good. We made it a garden of flowers, and really, when the morning of the 20th dawned, I felt content. We had another splendid function; eighteen of our sisters from Stone came to assist, and others on the following days. Altogether it was a most happy time, and a real joy, and I was quite glad to welcome old Father Joy, once more, and make the most of him, and I really did so with all my heart. It is not only the Church, but the completion of the Convent, and the addition of a bright, pretty cloister, and necessary offices, all which transform Stoke into a new place."

"*April* 22, 1886.

"I am reading George Eliot's Life, which I daresay you have already done. I wanted to know something about her. The so-called 'Life' does not tell you much, but sufficient for my purpose. Only I am still, as ever, perplexed, not why she is regarded as a genius, which I have no doubt she was, but why a teacher? I cannot discover what principles she taught, or what is the object aimed at in her books, of which I have only read two; very clever, but I still feel as a note of interrogation as to her object.

"As to her religious views, I perceive I was right in guessing that she had rather thrown up revealed doctrines, than formed any system to take their place. Anything so generally misty and shapeless as her utterances on that subject I never read, and I see Mr.

Cross admits he was never clear as to what she did or did not hold.

" For the rest, she may have been a charming person, but so far as the life goes, it does not give me a charming impression. I don't see how anybody has a right to resent criticism if they write for the public. As well put yourself in a shop window, and think it hard that people don't admire your goods."

" *July* 10, 1886.

" I perceive you are 'on scholastic thoughts intent.' Well, considering the regular squash under which English Catholics have lived up to a recent date, I don't think we should complain. They must take years to work up to the full use of their faculties. And honestly, I do hope there will always be a wide distinction between Catholic culture and that of the Protestant highflyers. What do you think of Holloway College, for instance, and its probable outcome ?

" As time goes on, I do not doubt that there will be appreciation of good education among secular Catholics, but we must be patient. After some hestiation, I put our Middle School at Stoke under the examinations of the Society of Literature and Art. I don't think *very* much of the Society, but its mode of examination is very convenient ; and it grants certificates and diplomas, which are of value nowadays. And moreover, the having to work out a syllabus sent by a 'London Society' is as good as champagne to the working powers of the children. The syllabus, too, was very tolerable. They have just had their first examination. Very satisfactory, and I think it will push the school amazingly. We have now nearly a hundred pupils, and it is called 'the Stoke High School.' Of course it is only middle-class, but I think it is solid.

" I am very well, only, like the rest of the rheumatic world, have suffered much all this year from rheumatism and sciatica. It has been a jubilee year for those particular demons, and the consequence is I walk with a stick."

"*Sept.* 15, 1886.

"According to your request I have been reading 'Deerbrook,' and have read it honestly through. All on the subject of un-amiability I think is excellent, and confirms my favourite theory as to the possibility and comparative easiness of curing faults of temper, though I don't know that I should have said adversity would have been the way. But that they are curable I am convinced.

"But, as with George Eliot, so with Miss Martineau, I am amazed at what a deterioration of religious belief there must have been, if indeed she ended in infidelity, as I have been assured she did. In this book the living for an immortal hope is one of the essential ideas, whatever other peculiarities of dogma she may have held, of which, however, none appear."

"*Sept.* 18, 1886.

"You have asked me some rather difficult questions, and I hope I may answer them correctly, but can only do my best.

"First: As to the high standard set forth by non-Catholics, and even non-Christians, I think the right answer, if we could get at it, would include many elements; namely, how far the light of natural reason will take us; how far God's grace helps and illuminates souls of good-will, outside the Church; and again, (a very remarkable point) how far Christianity and Catholicity have created an atmosphere which affects the judgments and the standard of those even who do not believe.

"You will see this very apparently in the way in which the later heathen philosophers, like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, approximated to Christian teaching. They breathed an atmosphere into which, unconsciously to them, Christianity had introduced new principles;

and they adopted them without knowing whence they came. And in the same way, a society which has cast off so much of Christian dogmatic teaching as that of to-day, still retains in its habits of thought and its standard a great deal of Christian teaching. Besides that, the light of natural reason, with good will and moral rectitude, does carry us a good way. Consider the whole story of Cornelius.

"Then there is a less gracious, but equally true and necessary thing to bear in mind; namely, that writing is not doing. It is not so very difficult to *imagine* a high standard, and assign high motives and perfect consistency, any more than it is difficult to write a sermon. The real puzzle is when one sees non-Christians living such good lives.

"Of course two things are quite certain: that God does require a greater perfection of us, who have the full light of faith; and secondly, that whilst thanking Him for anything good we see in others, and humbling ourselves to find ourselves often so inferior, it is true and safe to say we cannot judge their virtues, any more than their sins. It is quite possible, I mean, that there may be moral rectitude along with an entire deficit of those essentially Christian virtues, such as lowliness of heart, which are tests of the presence of divine grace. Remember that Hope is not a real man. It is a question to me if, had he existed, you would not have found, along with his high standard, certain specks of human infirmity in the direction of pride.

"I believe the things which constitute perfection and sanctity, and mark the difference between the disciple of nature and the disciple of grace, are not exactly exterior virtues (courage in bearing adversity, command of temper, and other things which, perhaps, natural elevation of mind leads to); but interior things, not so easily discerned or described. And though I agree with you that the absence of a very high standard among Catholics on some points is a great disappointment, yet this is certain, that when you come to the interior, there is a broad difference, and you generally find that they are in possession of certain principles and habits, to which good heathens and good heretics are strangers.

"I think, if I had time, I could pass the philosophy of 'Deerbrook' through a sieve, and show where the Christian element is wanting in some respects. The entire mode of treating the subject of disappointment in love as set forth in the conversation between Margaret and Maria Young, has in it (to me) something unsound; but possibly this comes of my reading it as a Religious."

[On the death of her sister.]

"*Jan.* 24, 1887.

"Thanks for all kind inquiries. I am all right in a way; that is to say, I am sure all has been right and best, and the loss which I have had before my eyes for years has come at last with so many softening circumstances, that, without pretence or affectation, I do feel grateful beyond measure. No one but myself knows what a heavy burden the life was which she laid down, a burden which often weighed on me also, through sympathy. Now that I can think of her as with God, and in His hands only, an old and very sore heartache is over. All the same, it has left a blank which is dreary enough at present, and which will not very readily fill up. My absence at the last, though it was a pang at the time, I feel no regret about. I weighed the whole question, and felt sure what it was right to do; and when that is the case, there is no room for regret. Only this is quite certain, that no amount of 'all right,' in conscience, reason, and even one's sensitive soul, can prevent flesh and blood having its say, and feeling as if half of itself had been buried.

"Meanwhile, I have got some English History to finish for the sixth edition, from 1880 to the present time. Justin M'Carthy's 'England under Gladstone' brings down to the end of 1884, and I think I shall manage 1885 and 1886 from newspapers—so it will get done somehow.

"If you see N——, you can tell him that a second edition of 'Songs in the Night,' with a few additions, is out. I don't know if he will like the additions, but he has often been at me to make some. I have been reading some more of Mrs. Ewing's books with great pleasure. Of course you know them?"

[*Undated,* 1887.]

"I am to be at Bow in October, and would, if N—— wished, exert myself to rout out the match-girl question on the spot. I fear the time has passed when I could write with anything like *nerve*, so I will promise nothing. But there are abominations connected with 'the female labour market,' in some of the Pottery towns, which, when they came to my knowledge some years back, did, literally, and not metaphorically, make me ill. I feel perfectly sure that no one who talks in parliament, and writes in Reviews, has a notion of a thousandth part of the dreadful truth.

"If my Duke (in her story, 'The New Utopia') is one of your Radicals, I am right in what I said, that we differ more in the name than the thing, for he was the antipodes of my sense of the genus. He employed certain talents, viz., wealth, position, rank, and independence, as a steward of those articles, and for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. Radicals, as I understand them, appear to consider that the possession of those talents is a robbery. Of course I know every possessor of them does *not* so employ them (though, up to a certain point, many do). But I am intimately convinced that, without a class which does possess them, there are certain good works which can never be efficiently carried out."

"*June* 21, 1887.

"The story [' Aroer '] is finished in a way, but wants a world of work and re-writing. I don't think the publisher you mention would do for this, and, in fact, I rather shrink from printing at all, because, without intending it, my heroine's vocation has got to be so very much my own experience, that it is slightly like printing an autobiography. The secular work for seculars, as a vocation, only comes in by the way. But I feel very much disposed to take up that subject separately, and put it as strongly as ever I can. If you were to read the story, you would see how I can't do more than touch on it here."

"*June* 25, 1887.

"Thanks for your letter. My story is 'A Story of Vocation,' but purposely includes many kinds. My heroine, of course, ends in religion, properly so called; but my hero ends in another way altogether, and I have a Tertiary in the world, and a married couple (woe is me! they are the worst to manage); all by way of showing the variety of vocations. My heroine, I think, is fairly strong and original; hero—sufficiently so; Tertiary, pretty fair, partly drawn from life, and written with an object—to show that broken hearts don't often go into convents (*never*, that I know of)—but the married pair don't satisfy me at all, and I feel disposed to lay me down and die each time I take them in hand! In fact, they have been supplied by a kind friend, only I am to polish them up myself, and at present I can't. There are bits of the heroine that are painfully autobiographical and they happen to be the strongest bits, as is, I suppose, unavoidable. I can only hope no one is alive to identify them!

"The whole thing really came from a desire to write a *woman's* character; all my former attempts being men.

"If I get it finished, you shall read it, even if we don't publish."

"*Dec.* 27, 1887.

"All good wishes returned with interest for Christmas and New Year. It is quite true that I have not written for ages, and equally so that I have been unusually occupied. I don't think I have ever thanked you properly for 'Katherine Regina,' which I read with interest, of course. I am quite sure nothing is exaggerated about poor, struggling womanhood. What I don't like is the writer's monomania against any institutions having any laws or regulations. What would come of a 'Home for Ladies,' without rules? But it is the original sin of Radicalism (begging your pardon) gravitating to anarchy."

"*Feb.* 11, 1888.

" . . . As one goes on living and losing people, I do think one gets to feel that those who depart, and our tie with whom becomes sanctified by death, grow to be among our most cherished possessions. Nothing alters, or can alter our relations with them, as separation and other things do alter living ties. There they are, enshrined and beautified, and securely our own for ever. We retire to them, and take refuge in the memory of them, from base, tiresome and disappointing things, which are always turning up in human existence; it is a sort of sanctuary, of which no other possesses the key, but which we can enter when we will."

"*March*, 1888.

"I was quite aware of N——'s impression regarding us. It was the judgment certain persons passed—not on *me*—but on dear Mother Imelda, of all persons I ever knew, the most thoroughly misunderstood by outsiders. They supposed her to be a clever woman of the world, and some other equally horrid and equally untrue things. I often used to 'boil' at it, but now it is rather sweet than otherwise to think how completely her real, beautiful soul was hidden from the eyes of the world, and never bespattered by its applause.

"Yes, it will indeed be nice to come to a day when all veils of prejudice will fall away like scales from our eyes. It is the main thing that keeps good souls apart in this world, specially in religious matters; but if you hint at such a thing, some one is generally ready to stone you as a heretic!"

"*Oct.* 23, 1888.

"I spent three weeks at S. Mary Church, and hope now to be quiet for a bit, and to occupy myself in building a big room for Children of Mary, etc.

"I am daily expecting 'Aroer' from the publisher, and shall send you a copy. I had to yield to pressure, and change the title of 'A Story of Vocation,' to 'A Story of a Vocation,' but it does not really express as much as I desired. You will see that it is not *a* vocation only, but the whole idea of vocation of divers kinds, that I had in my mind, though I don't think I have worked it out as well as I might have done.

"I have seen the Anglican 'Encyclical,' which is the only thing connected with that extraordinary humbug which has come into my hands. If the Ritualists can stand the fraternisation with every form of heretical Christianity, and the exclusion (exclusively) of the Catholic Church, they will bear anything; and that, I fear, is about their case. Anything *but* Rome. As you say, it makes one thank God for having the Rock under one's own feet, but very sad to see the world all at sixes and sevens in matters of faith.

" . . . Honestly, the only real joy in this world is to be allowed to help and comfort other people. If ever I think such a thing possible, it gives me a real good *thrill*.

"*October*, 1888.

"I send you 'Aroer' (just published). Do review it yourself, if you can. I am not *conscious* of having introduced the abominable word![1] But even if I have, it would give you such a rare opportunity of denouncing the crime! It would also be an occasion for your ventilating some of your own views; so now mend your best pen and go at it!

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[1] "Commence." The discussion on this subject has been already referred to.

"Anyhow, tell me exactly what you think of it; and whether you care for Arthur. Don't say he is impossible, for only in 1843 died M. de Neuville, the great benefactor of the Good Shepherd Community, whose history (which I read after 'Aroer' was in print) is very analogous to his. At any rate, I think it does good sometimes to give people the impossible, or what they call so, to think about. With nine people out of ten the impossible only means the supernatural. And what is the good of anybody who is not more or less supernatural?"

"*Nov.* 4, 1888.

"I send you a copy of 'Uriel,' to keep, please. I thought you had one already, or should have sent it you before. I shall be delighted if you will really be my critic in the ——. I have had no opinions yet.

"Of course you have heard of Cardinal Newman's illness. The bishop sent out circulars, in this diocese, asking for prayers, but I believe he has rallied. One can hardly desire to prolong a life so exceedingly feeble, except from the feeling that, when he is gone, there will have 'passed away a glory from the earth,' which we are not likely to see supplied in our lifetime."

"*Nov.* 8, 1888.

"Abundant thanks for your letter. It will be first-rate if you can get out a review of all the stories. I plead guilty to all your strictures, sketchiness in particular; only, it is unavoidable. I have no power of working out a three-volume affair, and am only up to little dabs of suggestion. Of course B—— and the Great Exhibition is a manifest blunder, easily explained by the fact that the first half was written fully two years ago, and the chapter on Babylon only this summer; and it was not till I read the whole in print, that I saw the anachronism. Not so bad as a geographical blunder in 'Utopia,' where I have put two places in Australia quite near, that are really some thousand miles apart!

"Claudia is—partly—N. There was an engagement in her case. But I took the allusion from a sad episode in another real history.

"As to Arthur; you see I had killed the Duke, and made Bevis go into a monastery,[1] so I was bound to contrive another way of finishing off Arthur, and I rather liked the idea of a man resigning his work to be finished by others. But I have not worked that out as I ought to have done. In short, I only contrive charcoal outlines. I agree with you that the conversation between him and Claudia is the best page."

"*Dec.* 11, 1888.

"Thanks for all your exertions in the literary dissection of that defunct party, A.T.D. I shall look forward to the entertainment in the spirit of meekness, and feel sure you will have dealt with me only too kindly. I enclose two documents which may interest you, on the subject of 'Aroer.' Cardinal Newman's letter, written in his sick-room, and not easy to decipher, is a real treasure, as I think it is most likely the last stroke of his pen I shall ever receive.

"Now, be it known to you that we have had a fire! Not a very bad one, though it is only owing to a conglomeration of special providences that we are left with a roof over our heads.

"On Sunday we began the Quarant' Ore, and were all going on very happily, when Mother Prioress walked into my room and told me quite calmly that the house was on fire; would I come and see? In a minute I was on the spot—an upstairs room, whence issued volumes of smoke, ominous sounds of crackling, and through the wainscot, the gleam of fire. Every one dashed water about, and sent for men. I took a poker and levelled the wainscot, laying bare a roaring fire in the wall, on which we 'commenced' to throw water, when about a dozen big men rushed into the room, whisked me and my poker I don't know where, and took things into their own hands. In the twinkling of an eye they dashed a hole through the ceiling, and were out on the roof, tearing off slates and burning beams, and throwing up water which we had handed to them. They had extinguished all but a few sparks before the engines arrived, and I believe they heartily enjoyed the game.

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[1] The characters here referred to occur in her two stories, "The New Utopia," and "Lady Glastonbury's Boudoir." Burns and Oates, London.

"You may imagine whether or not this was an incident in our small lives! I believe all Stone was in our garden; engines, firemen in helmets, and everybody, gentle and simple. Two firemen guarded the premises all night, and tramped about our dormitory, making sure there was no disposition to break out again. At the Evening Service a *Te Deum* was sung, in which all voices joined with enthusiasm. I must say, the sympathy shown, and the promptitude of the men did touch me; though privately, I believe they enjoyed it immensely, specially climbing and standing on one leg, with the nuns handing them buckets! It was a romance in three vols. to them. We were pretty tired when all was over, but every one behaved very well, and went about as coolly as if they were in choir. I am rather proud of my children, to tell you the truth. Old owls may be excused a partiality for their owlets!"

"*Jan.* 23, 1889.

"I am reading your paper, and accept all your criticisms with much meekness. Indeed, you are only too sympathetic (I won't say 'flattering,' for that and you would never go together!) But it is strange that together with your notice I received a letter calling me to account for the sin of writing so as to make people feel that every one who wants to be good must go into a convent, and that there is no way of saving one's soul in the world! Well, one must not expect to be understood, I suppose, but I did not really think that *that* was my besetting sin! I must try and correct my Latinised lingo, which is not deliberate, however, by any means. But I would have forgiven much harder hits (Mrs. Trimmer included!) for the sake of one kind thing you have said about friendship. No, indeed, religious life does not dry up the heart. I, at least, have no right to say so, after finding so many loving and lovable friends in it, and I hope I may never forfeit the title I used to bear in the world, of 'the hare with many friends'—though not certainly, in Gay's sense of the words! . . .

"Just now I am hard at work at St. Dominic, and do hope and trust I may live to finish him. But writing, when one gets rheumatic, is a penitential exercise for the body, as I daresay you have often experienced."

"*Jan.* 30, 1889.

"I find it difficult to reply to your questions, because as a fact, I have never formulated my own principles, and am hardly conscious of any fixed theory on which I write. I believe, however, that what lies at the bottom is an intense aversion to the world, and its maxims, and its ways; and an equally intense feeling as to the responsibility of riches and social advantages. As you know, I have not the least objection to a distinction of classes, and I think if we were all put on a level, and every one as rich and well off, and equal in other respects to his fellows, it would be destructive of the best qualities in human nature. I am an advocate of aristocracy, landlords, and the rest; but—with a very large but—chiefly because the possession of those things puts it into the power of men to do heroic things, which would be impossible if we all had £400 a year, paid quarterly, and no more.

"The man who wrote that I wanted to make everybody a nun (and who, you will be delighted to hear, is, I believe, a peer of the realm !) grumbled at the impracticability of making Arthur do what no one would, could, or should do. And why not ? That is what I want to know. Why is an heroic remedy of social evils to be treated as impossible ? I don't suppose everybody will 'sell all,' but what I mean is, surely good may be done by suggesting the possibility of the heroic. He wanted a story showing how people could be good in 'ordinary ways.' Of course they can ; only I have a suspicion that this sort of desire occasionally means, 'Just let me jog on comfortably ; the time for heroics is over.' And I maintain that it is not over, and that pettifogging, 'ordinary ways' will never stem the gigantic evils of London, with its 5,000,000 starving heathens. Not, I beg you to understand, that I despise the grains of mustard seed, which, often enough, have a large share of the heroic in them. I am only endeavouring to make manifestation of the predominant passion, which, in writing, leads me to kick over the traces with my heroes, and send them galloping off the beaten track. And exactly as this world-hatred made Arthur discontented with 'ordinary ways of doing good,' and guilty of carrying out the gospel recommendation literally, so it lies at the bottom of Norbertine's vocation (and somebody else's too) ; and the scene in the Great Exhibition was nothing but an endeavour to describe what again and again befell that somebody when occasion brought her and 'the world' in close contact. Half my nature-worship consisted, not so much in a love of beauty, as in the sensation, when you get among the rocks and moors—'Well, thank Heaven, one is free from the *world* !' Then—all of a piece, remember—I have never been able to get further in my ideas of Christianity than the Gospels. Long before I was a Catholic, I was called 'eccentric,' and 'tiresome,' for continually appealing to the gospel standard, and tormenting my dear parents with inquiries why, instead of dinner-parties, they did not give dinners to the poor, the halt, and the blind. And I still maintain that the real 'revolution' we want, is simply acting up to the gospel standard, and a tremendous revolution it would be! Then lastly, and to conclude; doing this is—you are perfectly correct in thinking—my notion of *duty*—that much-abused word, but in reality the sublimest of all things—the giving to God, to man, and to self their dues: to God, infinite adoration; to man, charity; to self, contempt. On which subject, some day I will show you something in the Breviary which is truly wonderful.

"S. Dominic, by turns, ravishes me and drives me into despair. He is so sublime, and, at the same time, how can you ever expect the nineteenth century to understand him? To do so, you must set out on the principle that *faith* is the greatest of all God's gifts to men, which is not exactly the strong point of the present day. Then, how can you get people, used to the ways and maxims, the likes and dislikes of to-day, to comprehend a life and a history in which the ideas, laws, habits, virtues, and vices were of the age of King John? Another difficulty is that to vindicate the strong measures taken against the Albigenses would need to expose their real character in a way which, to any modern pen, and, notably, a woman's, is simply impossible. They were monsters, and, I do believe, would be proceeded against by the state, even to-day, if any such sect were known to exist. But they were so bad, you cannot go within ten miles of the whole truth. Michelet, who was not exactly a bigot for Christianity, says they turned the whole south of France into Sodom and Gomorrah. It is the absolute ignorance which prevails on this point among Protestants which makes them write such rubbish. Then they lied so famously, that it was very hard work to catch and convict them, so that some sort of tribunal of investigation was necessary. And this, I fancy, was what the Inquisition really was. Until Sir S. Romilly changed our penal laws we hanged more men for sheep-stealing than were ever burnt for murder. People's instincts change so in a few years. Fancy what would be thought now, if a man were hanged for stealing a sheep !

"So you see I have answered your volume with another !"

"*March* 16, 1889.

"I dare say you have heard that Archbishop Ullathorne is dying. He had the Last Sacraments on Sunday, and the doctor then thought, 'might live through the night'; and he has gone on, *dying*, with his mind strong, vigorous and cheerful up to now ! The magnificent calm and recollection of such a death robs it of its sadness ; but to me and many of us, it is the loss of our best friend of thirty-five or forty years, and no one needs to be told what that is. Still, how can one grudge one's best friend going to Heaven ? All mine are there. If I ever get there myself (God grant it), what a crowd of dear faces I shall find awaiting me ! But still it is a sad pull, this waiting from post to post for the last word, and I cannot quite describe what the last four days have been like. Happily it is fine, so I get out, and work off my restlessness that way.

"Yes, I know Father Reginald's book on 'Charity,' in manuscript, and it is very good, and I am very glad he is printing it. Perhaps it will do you and me good ! I quite agree as to the impossibility of keeping one's self sweet if one went in for politics. Imagine a member of Parliament being able to be in charity with his opposite neighbours ! Well, it is all very strange ; certain things (I won't name) seem to me—and I doubt not their contradictories seem to you—so true, there is no calling them in question. But half the world thinks exactly opposite. How can that be? I can only suppose that none of us human beings sees any subject all the way round, and so, all our views are only partial truths. There is, of course, an eternal, absolute truth on all questions, but that is what is hidden to human eyes. We only see bits, and I do believe that in all the most opposite creeds, Tory and Radical, Guelph and Ghibelline or call it what you like, there is a bit, a morsel of the eternal truth, but not all. That, dwelt on, makes one tolerably tolerant of people who think differently with us. But, really, I do not think we are bound to be tolerant of cheating and lying, and hypocrisy and calumny, and all the other vile things which come to daylight in the midst of political contention, on whatsoever side it may be."

"*April* 25, 1889.

"A happy Easter to you. We certainly had a doubly-trying Lent; I don't know how the time went, but the worst got over at last, and now we have our dear father laid to his last rest in view of the choir, which, I think, must have been in his mind when he chose the spot. It is an immense loss for us: but life is a chain of losses. After a certain age it becomes really and truly made up of good-byes and departures."

[On Cardinal Newman's death.]

"*August* 16, 1890.

"We expect N—— here from the funeral, so shall hear all about it. At present I can't think of anything else. I have heaps to do, but underneath everything I am thinking of the dear saint, and seemed all yesterday to see him as he knelt at our Mother's grave on that memorable day.

"I have seen the *Times*. Leading article good. Notice of life will give you plenty to remark on. I don't mind them, as Protestants, taking exception at things; though it is funny about their complaining of 'his tone of certainty' as a defect! Happy defect! But to hint at his works being soon forgotten is—mean! They will be forgotten when Bacon and Shakespeare are forgotten—not before. Heigh-ho! How small everybody seems now! I can't think of any other great mind surviving.

"I should like to go into retreat for a month, taking the volume on 'Psychology' with me, which I hope to find very interesting. I am charmed to find you care for these things, for so few people do, one hardly dares name the subject. I am amused by the expression of countenance with which some regard a book on whose back appear the words, 'General Metaphysics,' as if it must necessarily be incomprehensible to any ordinary intelligence."

"*August* 31, 1890.

"A thousand thanks for sending me the letters of the cardinal's. Those which most interested me were the ones in which he touches on Eternal Punishment, and I think his way of doing so is just the only right way—to acknowledge it as a difficulty to reason, but not to faith. Also, what he says about the nature of eternity is very striking.

"The excitement about him does not seem to abate in any degree, and I suppose for a time we shall be deluged with memoirs and reminiscences; but will any one be able to unveil the real man? I doubt. It always seems to me that his was a soul and a mind whose intimate workings were like those exquisite shades of colour in nature which no material pigment could ever reproduce, and which can only be conveyed by light. Any representation of them is little more than a daub, and so will any biography be of J. H. N.

"After saying that, is it not impudence to say I am going on with St. Dominic? Well, one does one's best, conscious that it *is* a daub. I have, however, to stop daubing till I return from my journeys, and would be so glad to find myself with my books in some of your German retreats, far away from visitors and interruptions and able to get into my Saint !

" The illustration of the life occupies me a good deal—very pleasantly—for I do love the artistic, but it all takes time. People write to me, suggesting one hundred and fifty things they want me to write ; some seem to think I am bound to write the life of Archbishop Ullathorne—and all the time I want to shut myself up with my beloved Holy Father, and think of nothing else ! I wish I could show you my woodcuts. You know, what music is to you, pencil and brush are to me, and Sulman's drawings are simply angelic !

" I go to Stoke next week, for ten days' business, which I hope, includes the first germ of a house for getting Catholic children. Do pray about it. It is so wanted there. We have begun visiting at the workhouse, and they let us have the children for Catechism, but that is only half and half. We ought to have them out, and would to-morrow, if we had but the house to put them in. I pray about it till I get quite hot ! "

" *April* 30, 1891.

" I have sent you the preface to 'St. Dominic,' to show that he is a *fait accompli*, and I hope he will come out of the press some time next month. I don't know what your views about religious toleration may be, and whether you will approve what I have said on that head. But I submitted it to the Bishop, who said it was all right, and that he should not be sorry if the observations were taken up, and led to the subject being ventilated. Practically, of course, we in the nineteenth century *must* tolerate to be tolerated ; but that does not establish the principle of freedom of conscience to think and teach error.

" I am a little surprised that you like Rose Heywood so well." [A character in Mother Francis Raphael's last story, 'Dalmeny Brothers,' written about this time.] "I did not make her an heiress from any particular love of rich people! But I wanted to give her as many claims to superiority over poor Paul as I could, in order that I might more powerfully represent him as winning the course simply by moral worth and power. It is impossible to appreciate one's own work, but I have always thought Norbertine, in the first half of 'Aroer,' my best woman character; she is not worked out enough towards the end. The real object of 'Dalmeny Brothers,' however, is to plead for the possibility of country gentlemen living as country gentlemen, instead of going to the dogs by trying to be men of fashion. If you lived in the country, you would see what I mean; so many families ruined, because they will aim at fashionable, expensive life in their country houses, instead of being what they might be in their own station."

"*Oct.* 15, 1890.

"With regard to ——'s remarks on the subject of loneliness being the special suffering of persons consecrated to God, there is little to be said, except that such suffering is and must be inevitable. I don't think there is a remedy. The fact is, that if people are in earnest when they take a step which, whether in or out of Community, is a consecration to God alone, it follows with the most rigid logic, that they have to separate from the world, in some shape or form. They have to make a total sacrifice, and take God for their portion. That, if anything, is the meaning of their state. It is an espousal; and you know in marriage we give ourselves to one, leaving all others. It seems to me that a life consecrated by vow, even in the world, implies this, and in some sort necessitates it. But whether in the world or in religion, it is not to be supposed that the sacrifice can fail to be costly to nature. To some more, to others less. All have not the same stock of desires, attachments, tastes, attractions, and the like, to offer to God. There really are a good many men and women who jog on pretty comfortably, in ignorance of what they like or dislike, and whose whole existence is rather negative than positive.

"But where souls possess a larger stock of positive interior possessions, two things follow; they must suffer more in the practice of abnegation, and the compensation will be proportionately greater. When I say this, I don't mean to imply that people are bound, in virtue of a vow, to turn their backs on all intellectual or artistic sources of enjoyment or recreation; certainly not. Neither are we so bound, even in religion. But I think one feels how impossible it would be, when once the mysterious seal has been set on our lives, ever to give one's whole heart, time, or interest to such things, and unless pursued in some way which directly belongs to the service of God, there is always a something—at least, I speak for myself—which puts into these things a feeling there used not to be. Something akin to the lines:

'I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I may not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.'

"It is not that one is less sensible of their beauty, but, apart from God, the beauty is so empty.

"And with regard to companionship, even in community life, though we all love each other heartily, the cases must be exceptional where one meets with sympathy on many points, and a Religious must of necessity lock up a good many inner chambers, and keep them for the One Friend, who knows all. I have been fortunate, more so than most people, in finding and making friends, and both in the world and in religion have enjoyed a great deal more than my proper share of sympathy and friendship. But it is not a thing one has a right to reckon on, and I fancy that, as a rule, community life is, and must be, a lonely life.

"Of course much of this depends on one's self. If you don't give, you can't expect to receive. I believe my nature is a giving one; at least, only so can I explain the fact that all my life long I have been receiving. But, however it is, it is certain that in this matter experiences vary greatly, but that perhaps, as a rule, Religious do not share together their deep *intime* life. The fact that that life *is* so very deep, may possibly be one reason; it is not to every one that one can open it.

"All this, as I see it, is only part of the price we have to pay for an inestimable treasure. Our Lord, when He takes possession of us, infuses into all earthly things a something which prevents our ever belonging to them again. He makes a great void in them, and in our own hearts, just because He means to fill that void with Himself. I have expressed it somewhere in the 'Songs in the Night;' indeed it is the keynote of most of them. 'Old thoughts in Verse' has a touch of it, and notably, 'Loss and Gain,' and 'The Flock Restored;' and several others. They acknowledge the sense of loss—of separation from what was prized before—of loneliness in the world, and death to the world. But—for there is a but, and a very big one—would we have it otherwise? Is it not, after all, the pledge that God has accepted our sacrifice, and will give us Himself?

"Something akin to this was the way He acted with our own S. Rose, when He would not let her take pleasure in anything besides Himself,—no, not even in her flowers—but crushed them all; and when she complained, told her with such bewitching love and tenderness that He was jealous even of her love of flowers!

"No; we would not really have it otherwise, or desire to have offered a holocaust, which should cost us nothing."

[*Undated, probably* 1892].

"What I feel about those who say they have suffered from faculties unused, *i.e.*, in the matter of friendship, is this: that God, as we know and love Him, is a personal God, a Father, One who knows us each individually, and loves us individually, and so provides what He designs for each one, not in a lump, or by chance, but with an individual intention. He knows why He gives one many friends, and why He gives another few; why He places one in a happy home, and denies another the sweetness of family life. I think that to realise this is to realise that we are being loved and cared for in a wonderful way, so much better than if all were made alike, and disposed of alike, like a heap of bricks, all after one pattern.

"When we get a firm hold on that thought, that the Providence of God means His personal love of you and me and each one, everything gets right. Imagine a creature loved, preferred, and chosen by God! If we really took in the idea fully, I believe it would kill us.

"God has been so wonderfully bountiful to me in that way all my life. I suppose no one can ever have had so many or such excellent friends; and I use the term, not in its conventional, but in its very closest sense. Perhaps you will say that to have many such friends does not argue much for their quality, and will quote Gay's (detestable) lines. But I deny that friendship is but a name unless you stint it to one. It is precisely the beauty of friendship that it is so free from the narrowness of passion, and so makes the heart big, instead of little. I know that my friends have been the happiness and the grace of my life, and though time has stolen them almost all away, I am well content to have been loved by so many dear and holy souls, and to have (as I trust) still loving me in God."

"*Aug.* 18, 1892.

"I am glad you like the Archbishop's letters. The different religious communities seem to relish them greatly.

". . . I have often wondered within myself what would have been the upshot if I had chosen an enclosed order, (as I was greatly moved to do). I think what really deterred me was the fear of its opening the door to depression; for I know by experience what that monster can do for you if he fixes his horrible fangs in your soul What N—— says about the risk of losing fervour being greater in an enclosed than in an unenclosed convent is in the same direction. Much, however, of that applies almost equally to the religious life, *per se*, and not merely to one particular form of it. Specially the central principle that *what* you do is of no moment, so long as it is the work of obedience. Of course no one can help putting their heart and their interest into the work they do. But if this ever gets to be an attachment to the work, and a difficulty in exchanging it for another, good-bye to the religious spirit and peace of soul—which last is the one great thing to be aimed at.

" I suppose N—— will soon be getting into harness again. Do tell her to trot gently ! I am used to giving my young ones a general advice on the excellence of *trotting* over *cantering*, in things spiritual. I remember once hearing a gentleman discourse on the kind of pace professional pedestrians can most easily keep up. Not too fast, and not dawdling; but a quiet, brisk, even walk: something like the trot of a good roadster, who never breaks into a gallop. And it seemed to me to typify exactly the rate of going which really accomplishes work that is satisfactory.

" I am at present having the joy of writing begging letters for the new ward of our Hospital; a frightful occupation to which several years of indulgence ought to be attached ! "

"*Sept.* 13, 1892.

"I hope you don't think I have had measles, cholera, or scarlet fever! But during dear S. M. Francis' illness all my spare time was given to her. She had a *perfect* end. Just six weeks of a painless decline, hardly to be called illness; her mind clear and vigorous. Then at the last a very rapid and very gentle death, with, I believe, perfect consciousness to the end. Of course we miss her unspeakably; but to wish for anything different, when you see a dear soul, at eighty, going to heaven so sweetly and calmly, is impossible.

"Can you ascertain for me what books of Dr. Ward's are published? I am reading his introductory volume to 'Nature and Grace,' and like it so much, I should like to read more. I know you have read the volume I mean, and liked it, so thought perhaps you could tell me what else of his in that line is published. I cannot say what a refreshment that class of reading is, when one has had a long spell of dealings with *people*. To get out of people into principles is a delightful kind of 'inhaling'!" [She refers here to a process of inhaling she had been obliged to go through for her throat.]

"*Sept.* 21, 1892.

"What a pity you only know the Dialogue [of S. Catherine] through the French translation! It is not always very faithful. Years ago I translated from the Italian, for Community use, three of the four parts; and what I should best like of all possible future work would be to make a complete English translation. But it is a book that would never pay its expenses, and also a work which would require notes and illustrations. Were our dear Bishop Ullathorne still living, he would assist me in this, but now he is gone I have no one who can do me the same kind offices he did, in the way of revisal, correction, and comment. And S. Catherine sometimes goes down so deep, that I should not always trust my own understanding of the meaning. Though, in general, even when deep, she is wonderfully clear.

"Yes; it is only too true that the prevailing notion of Almighty God—even among many pious Catholics—is (if you will pardon the comparison) that of a canny lawyer, who tries to find a flaw in our lease, in order to poke us into the bad place. It has come of perpetual *self*-examination and *self*-contemplation, which have banished the contemplation of God, as He is, out of the field, and made us so conscious of our own miseries and nothing else, that we think such horrid creatures as we are can't be dear to God, and must go to the bad. I don't think one person in five has a true idea of God, on the side of His love, and love for souls.

"During one of his illnesses, Bishop Ullathorne took to reading S. Catherine over again, and says: 'It has given me a new devotion in saying the *Credo*.' I always feel as if her Dialogue was little more than a commentary on the Creed."

"*Oct.* 31, 1892.

"I must not longer delay thanking you for your good wishes for the Feast of S. Raphael. And indeed he has been wonderfully kind to me this year, and brought me a whole bagful of consolations, little and big, so that I have really hardly known how to get through *Glorias* enough to thank him. Altogether I have been feeling very happy, and that, you know, goes a long way towards making one good: at least, it does so with me.

"Now I am going to tell you a funny thing that happened before I left Bow. I got a letter from the President of the Literary Committee, or Council, connected with the Chicago Exhibition, telling me I had been elected a member thereof! That is, of what they call the 'Advisory Council.' As the Exhibition is entirely cosmopolitan, and has nothing exclusively Catholic about it, it was odd for them to select me, who, as a writer, am Catholic or nothing. I took advice about it, and was advised not to refuse, as the infusion of a Catholic element, even to the small amount represented by my personality, was a good thing, and moreover it showed a certain respect and good feeling towards Catholics and their principles, which was not without its value. I believe I am expected to *do* something, though I don't quite know what, but have written to inquire. As far as I can make out, I shall have to write some sort of paper; but I shall know more in a week or two. This is for your private information alone, for I don't want to be *advertised* in so singular a category, and feel rather sheepish about it altogether! If I write anything, and if I make anything of the subject I have in my mind, you shall hear more about it."

"*January* 18, 1893.

"We certainly have had a very happy Christmas; I don't exactly know why more than usual, except that sometimes the sun looks out from between the clouds, and pours out a little pool of light. We have had no sickness, for one thing, except at S. Mary Church, where one of our elder sisters died, after a few days' illness. But her death was so *specially* consoling, that we can only reckon it among things to be thankful for.

"Now I must tell you a little trifle which has pleased me. During the Christmas time, three of the children in the boarding school at Bow, who were spending their holidays there, brought Sister N—— 2s. 6d. they had 'collected,' and begged her to give it to the poor. Altogether they made it up to 3s. 10d., with which they gave a breakfast to thirteen poor children. I was so pleased with them that I sent them five shillings, to spend on another breakfast for fifteen; and the children were to serve and attend on them. These fifteen were all the very poorest they could find, and among them were three whose mother keeps them very tidy, but who can hardly find them bread to eat. That morning she had been obliged to send them to school without a morsel, and when they had gone, she went up to her bed-room, and knelt down before a picture of the Sacred Heart, and said, ‘ O Lord, find something for my children to eat, for I have nothing to give them.’ As soon as they got to the school, the sisters sent them up to the convent for their breakfast, and when all the fifteen had eaten as much as they could, so much was left over, that Sister N—— told them they might come up at four o’clock and eat up the remainder.

“ The three little girls therefore went home in the evening, and said : ‘ O mother, we have had two *such* good meals ! ’ The poor mother burst into tears, and exclaimed : “ It was the Sacred Heart sent you the food, for I asked our Lord to get you something to eat ! ’ Was not that a nice little incident ?

“ Lombez on ‘ Interior Peace ’ is very good, chiefly, I think, for scrupulous troubles. But the treatise on the ‘ Peace of the Soul,’ at the end of the ‘ Spiritual Combat,’ I like better, because it takes in a larger grasp of the subject. And, after all, peace—real interior peace —means much more than freedom from fidgets.”

“ *Feb.* 12, 1893.

“ This is good-bye before Lent. I am just now having a fight to resist pressure which is put on me to write a paper for the Chicago Congress on a subject they want me to treat, and which I am resolved not to treat, viz. : The work done by Religious Women for Literature, from St. Hilda downwards. They don’t see how vile it would be for a religious woman to appear, blowing the trumpet for her own class. If they will take the paper I have prepared (on the Imagination), and on which I have something to say—well and good. If not, the Congress will get nothing out of me. I have just despatched my ultimatum to the Vice-President, and the result remains to be seen.

"What you say about injudicious alms-giving is very true. I have seen and heard a great deal of the poor this winter, for every one has been out of work and starving, and we have been at our wits' end to know how to help them. Well; all I can say is, I am lost in admiration at their patience and, in the long run, at their modesty. They are grateful for what you do, but many sit quietly in their houses, without fire, without food, almost without clothing, and neither complain nor beg, anyhow not in an offensive way. We have to find them out, for the most part. Then their gratitude. One of our Sisters, lately dead at St. Mary Church, was for years very active among the poor, and since her death many have come to the priest with their little offerings for masses for the repose of her soul. One would value a mass procured by the poor, would one not?

"If you want a really delicious book, get 'Jesus the All Beautiful.' It is written by a Carmelite nun. But no one would guess it was by a feminine hand. I don't know when I have read anything I liked so much. It touches the real thing, and that is the personal reality of our Lord, as the object of all lovableness. Once you get at that, you reach the goal of all spirituality, instead of going on for ever knocking and scraping at your own vileness. Do read it.

"I am quite well, and have not had a cold this winter, which I can't understand. Lame, of course, but that is nothing. Besides Chicago, I have a number of small-irons in the fire, mostly very small, but they keep me occupied.

"If the Americans give me my tether over the Imagination, I shall have a very few copies printed (one must print for their highnesses!) and will send you one. One of the members writes to propose my going over to read it myself!! Decidedly the world is getting very topsy-turvy."

"*Aug.* 18, 1893.

". . . The troubles and disappointments of life are a hackneyed theme, one would suppose; and yet, to my thinking, no one, except perhaps Cardinal Newman, has ever said the real thing about it all. He always felt the mystery of life, and it is a mystery—so good, and so bad; so rich, and yet so empty; such a complete paradox, that it contains in itself, quite apart from the teaching of Faith, all-sufficing proof that it cannot be ended here, and that there must elsewhere be a solution to its perplexities.

". . . Our Lord knows best, and gives what is best, and no doubt we should make sad blunders if we chose for ourselves; but it is quite curious how seldom any one is allowed to have the ideal of their imagination. From time to time (only in the sensitive, not in the rational part of me) I get a sort of hunger and thirst for perfect solitude, in some country place, near a church, but far away from humanity; knowing all the while that for humanity I was made. I never allow the feeling to bother me, still less to unsettle—but the appetite is there. A ten days' retreat is the nearest approach to it, and that I hope to get early in October.

"I am delighting much in Cardinal Newman's 'Devotions.' Printed prayers of other people's are generally so odious, but some of his seem to put into words just what one desires to say to God; and how humble they are! So full of profound self-abasement. I am feeling just now as if I should like to crawl to the sea-shore with the book, and pray all day long."

"*Sept.* 1, 1893.

"Of course all these deaths[1] try my nature. Still it is all right, provided one can hold fast by God, and I think trouble makes one do that. So don't be disturbed about me, but only pray that I may keep the peace of my soul, and know what is right to do in some puzzling matters. I am not at all fretting or fuming, and 'Cardinal Newman' helps me wonderfully. There has been coming on me of late such a sense of detachment, or, I should rather say, of the necessity of detachment from everything, and one's self in particular, which the presence of death seems to emphasise. Only one thing to care for, and to aim at, and to live for: God. One grasps it very imperfectly, but, if only for a moment, it is a moment of perfect peace. Don't be afraid: I am not going to be detached from my friends. It is one of the blessings of friendship, that it is such a calm sweetness; it never seems to have any soil of earth about it, but to be a foretaste of heaven. My friends are to me a sort of sacrament. If God deprives me of them, well and good; but I don't think He will, except to take them to heaven, where they will be more mine than ever.

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[1] Two or three Sisters of the Congregation had died during the past year or so.

"If nothing prevents, I hope to get a peaceful retreat in October at Stoke,[1] and shall certainly carry in with me enough matter to render the Four Last Things very easy meditation.

"I wonder if you know Walter Hilton's 'Scale of Perfection?' In case you don't, I send you a jewel out of it. (You know he was a Carthusian, *temp.* Henry VII.) After a passage about mortification of passions, he goes on:

"'This mayst thou doe the better, and the more readily, if thou be diligent and careful to set thy heart upon one thing; and that is nought else but a spiritual desire after God, how to please Him, love Him, know Him, and see Him, and to enjoy Him by grace here in a little feeling, and in the bliss of Heaven in a full being. This desire, if thou keep it, will tell thee what is sin, and what is not; and what thing is good, and what better; and if thou wilt but fasten thy thoughts to the same desire, it shall teach thee all that thou needest, and it shall procure thee all that thou wantest. And therefore whensoever thou risest against the ground of sin in general, or against the ground of any particular sin, hang fast upon this desire, and set the point of thy thoughts more upon God, whom thou desirest, than upon the sin which thou abhorrest: and if thou doe so, then God fighteth for thee, and will destroy sin in thee. And thou shalt much sooner come to thy purpose if thou doest this, than if thou shouldest leave thy humble desire principally after God, and set thy heart only against the stirrings of sin, as though thou wouldst destroy it by thy own mastering of it; but thou shalt never so bring it about.'

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[1] This retreat, so often referred to, never took place; it was postponed on account of necessary business, and early in the November of this year, Mother F. Raphael was struck down by her last illness.

" I think that quite perfect, and it seems to contain just what nine souls out of ten nowadays are most in want of: the going to God, instead of the everlasting scraping away at one's nasty self, which is never a whit the better for all the scraping."

" *Sept.* 4, 1893.

" If you don't know Walter Hilton, you must do so at once. Father Dalgairns published a modern edition, with a long preface of his own. It is a pretty little book, in frightfully small, but clear print. Our copy is that of 1659, and is worth its weight in gold. Do get the gettable edition, and you will thank me for telling you of it.

" In the Third Part there is the celebrated chapter on the pilgrim going to Jerusalem, which has been copied or imitated by so many writers; but Hilton is the original. The latter part is purely contemplative, but withal so simple and practical; and just now to me, so consoling, taking one so straight to God, that I can't sever myself from the book, though I have known it for years, and could say much by heart.

"The language, too, is so lovely. That one word, 'endless'—how sweet it is!

"Our Lord just now has got me on His threshing-floor, and is giving me a right good penance. May it thresh some good grain out of, or into me. But through it all, my soul is at peace, and I can say:—

'Do thou Thy blessed Will;
I will lie still."

"*Oct.* 16, 1893.

"I hope to crawl away into the desert after the 24th. At present I am reading up S. Richard, and find myself quite unexpectedly among the 'Ankresses,' with whom he had a great deal to do, and is even supposed by some to have been the writer of the 'Ancren Rule.' What a mistake to think that the English character is not formed for contemplation! Except in Egypt, I doubt if any country so abounded in solitaries as England did when she was Catholic. It is only that vile Protestantism that has turned us all into shopkeepers."

"*Oct.* 25, 1893.

"I am trying to acknowledge all the kind letters which S. Raphael brought me under his wings yesterday, yours among the number.

"Among my other feast letters I got—what do you think? A document from the Holy Father, sending his blessing to me, and my books, and my children! I was so ashamed! Padre Granello, O.P., had obtained it for me, as a thank-offering for allowing him to translate S. Dominic into Italian!

"I may add, that that morning, at Mass, I had been praying about certain books (and one in particular) which I am being pushed to undertake, and I did what I never remember doing before—I prayed for a token, to know if going on writing was pleasing to God, or not; and the first thing that jumped out of the post-bag was this same document, which I took to be an answer, and it comforted me somewhat."

[Yet it was only a few days after this, and still under the impression of joy excited by the Holy Father's blessing, that she said to a Sister: "I feel as if the Pope had turned the page, and written 'Finis.'" And so, in fact, it proved.]

"*Nov.* 3, 1893.

"As I told you I was deep in a cold, you may perhaps care to know that, after remaining in it for a week, I am gradually emerging, but feel as if I had left half my head behind. I fancy it has been just a touch of influenza, of which at Stoke they have had more than a touch. . . .

"All this has been rather a check both to Retreat and S. Richard, for when one's head feels like a mashed pumpkin, reading, or writing, or praying are equally impossible. But I am coming to life again, and hope to be all ready for Father B. If I am really able to carry out S. Richard I hope to make a nice thing of him; but what one really needs is not merely books, but health and ability to grub into localities, and so put life into it all. To-day I have had a very civil letter from one of the Prebendaries of the Cathedral at Chichester, to whom I wrote. I want, if I can, to give an idea of Sussex in the thirteenth century, which would be a little original."

[The "cold" referred to in this letter proved to be the beginning of the fatal illness, which lasted for six months, and ended with the writer's death on April 29, 1894. The extract which closes this series was written from her death-bed.]

"*Dec.* 1, 1893.

"I begin this, not knowing when I shall finish, as you may suppose. To begin then, the announcement by the doctors of a hopeless malady, which came on the

Sisters like a shock, was no surprise to me. I had long felt that the machine was breaking down; and no one but myself knows what the difficulty of living has been for some four years past; and knowing all this makes me pretty confident that though the end is not immediate, it is approaching very surely. The doctor says the malady may run its course in a year, but I don't think he expects it will be so long, except that I have a great fund of physical strength to pull down.

"Well—I am at peace. Our Lord in His goodness has been preparing me for a great change for some time past. I can't describe what that interior preparation has been, more than that everything has fled away, except the one thought of God. My God and my All! God, the only Good, the only Beauty, the only Love, and *my* God! And now that they tell me I am going to Him, how can I wish it otherwise? A sober certainty, too good to be true.

"The pain has been and is horrible; but that has its good side. Only let me tell you one thing I have learnt. No one can bear real pain out of courage and endurance. Nothing can do it, but the Grace of God; and it squeezes a huge lump of pride out of one to feel this.

"*Dec.* 2.—Rather a bad day. The doctors give leave for the last Sacraments; so I hope, please God, to receive that immense blessing this afternoon. Don't think this means I am going to-morrow. I am only anxious to have all the help I can get, whilst I keep my senses clear.

"*Dec.* 3.—I had the unspeakable consolation of the last Sacraments yesterday, and cannot say what they have done for me—all too much; I think the happiest day of my life. . .

"God bless you, dear. No need to say much. We have loved one another truly, and in God, and our love is beyond death, and belongs to eternity.—Your devoted in Christ, M. F. R."

PART II

I

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY CERTAIN SCRIPTURE TEXTS

I. ON SOME OF OUR LORD'S PARABLES

I. *THE HARVEST FIELD*

S. MATT. xiii.

THERE is no sight in nature that touches me like a harvest field. I think it had some special attraction for our divine Lord Himself. There is no image He dwelt on so minutely as those of the sower and the harvest. In the thirteenth chapter of S. Matthew's Gospel, He delivers two distinct parables, one of the sower and the other of the harvest, and carefully interprets both. "The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the reapers are the angels" (vers. 38, 39).

Possibly the often hearing of these words may have indelibly associated Him to me with the field of waving corn, bright with its many-coloured flowers, or the harvest field when the golden sheaves stand stacked, while the reapers are busy at work, mowing or binding, so that all these lovely sights have perhaps acquired a sort of gospel colouring which sanctifies and endears them to me. They are among our earliest images of divine things, and they speak to us at once of our childhood and our childish thoughts of God and heaven. Even the poet felt their power, and tells us how the unbidden tears "rise to the heart, and gather in the eye, when looking on the happy autumn fields, and thinking of the days that are no more."

What do the fields say to us ?—these " happy autumn fields ? " Look at them when they are still green, and just beginning to ripen into gold. The ears are getting full and heavy ; and what a countless number of ears there are ! Who could number all the grains in that one field ? and yet each one has grown, as our Lord says in another place, " first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear " (S. Mark iv. 28). Each one has received its portion of rain and sunshine, and has in itself the germ of life and the principle of reproduction.

In this, too, the harvest field has its lesson : " The field is the world." And just as with the ears of corn, so in some vast multitude do we look and see hundreds of thousands, each one an individual soul, which receives its own distinct graces, and brings forth its own fruit in different proportion. " The field is the world." Not all, then, is good seed ; we know well enough that there are tares mingled with the corn. But besides the tares and cockle there are other things which always find their place in the happy corn-fields : bright scarlet poppies and the blue corn-flowers, and wild heart's-ease and mignonette, and many another lovely flower, which springs up without being sown by man's hand, and seems to love the companionship of the golden corn. See how the wind passes over the field, and the full ears bend hither and thither, and as they do so the many-coloured flowers peep out of their midst. I have not the heart to call them " cockle." To me they rather seem to speak of the joy and beauty which spring up under the feet of those who serve God.

His service is not all barren duty. He garners up, it is true, only the full ears. But He is so good and gracious that He permits that joy and peace and sweetness should mingle with our duty, as the flowers mingle with the golden corn. He permits that it should be not only " a good," but a " pleasant thing, for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm cxxxii. 1). At least this is to me what the flowers in the corn-field say.

"The field is the world." Happy autumn fields, you say, bright with flowers, golden in the sunshine. Yes, but the days are fast shortening, and the harvest is at hand. These beautiful ears must be cut down and die; they are only here for that end and purpose. They have no value except in their death. We do not prize them for their beauty, or their graceful motion as they wave in the summer breeze. We do not care for the bright flowers that blossom among their stalks, nor do we spare them from the sickle, for any of these causes. The seed was sown that it might bear a hundredfold, and then be cut down for the harvest, and when the appointed time comes, those golden ears must fall beneath the sickle. So generation after generation of men and women grows up, and when the time comes they die; but the end and purpose of their life survive them, and their works, like the full ears, are garnered for life eternal.

It is well to remember this when we look at those lovely autumn fields; otherwise their beauty might lead us to forget how short-lived they really are. Perhaps it is the sense of their being things of a day, which makes the tears gather in our eyes as we look at them, and at all the beautiful passing things of earth. Earth is not heaven. "The field," beautiful as it is, "is the world," and the world with all its charms is perishable and passes away. Therefore even the innocent beauty of the world has an undertone of sadness. It awakens a longing for the beauty that will not perish, the beauty, not of earth, but of heaven. Only in heaven will beauty and music have no such tones of sadness to mar their joy. But here below the rapture they awaken is often allied to weeping.

"The reapers are the angels." To those who greatly love the holy angels, it is a sorrow that we cannot see them face to face. They are our nearest friends—about our path and about our bed; we long to behold them, and to hear their voice; but they are hidden from our gaze. Will the veil ever be lifted in this life? Possibly, at the last hour, they may make themselves known to us. Possibly, as we lie on our death-beds, we may behold the friendly countenance of the reaper whose sickle is raised to cut the thread of life. But that is not all; they will not merely come to us as the messengers of death, but as opening to us the doors of a new life. The Master will say to the reapers: "Gather the wheat into my barn."

Segneri has a beautiful passage on these words: "What is this barn but Paradise, where the blessed will be like the wheat in the barn, safe and secure, and no longer exposed to injury from wind or weather. There will be an end of frost and cold; storms will be over, and the time come for everlasting rest. And yet more than all besides, this thought will fill the elect with joy—that they will all be together, no longer obliged to dwell among the wicked who from day to day vex the just soul with unjust words. There is no chaff there; in heaven all are pure wheat: they all love, and praise, and adore, and bless God, and there is no one, as on earth, to do them wrong. And this, I think, our Lord desired to signify by that sweet word '*Congregabit*. Now, for the greater glory of God, the just are obliged to be separated one from another—one is labouring in the north, another in the south. But on that great day our Lord will say unto them all at last: 'He shall gather together the dispersed of Israel,' His elect; and who shall express their joy when they find themselves thus re-united, never again to be separated, or to cease from praising God! Oh, what happiness to be joined to the noble company of the blessed! Should we not be ready to pay any price to attain such blessedness!"

Truly may we say so, and look forward to the joyful harvest home, when we too may be gathered into that barn, our Father's house, and abide in that blessed company for ever!

II. *THE HIDDEN TREASURE*

"The kingdom of God is like unto a treasure hidden in a field."
—S. MATT. xiii. 44.

ON a certain day, a man working in a field came upon a treasure which was hidden there—or, perhaps, he did not find the treasure itself, but some signs and indications where it lay buried, and how it might be obtained. He was quite sure it was there, safe, and that no one knew the secret but himself; but how was he to secure it? He could not go and dig and search in another man's field, or he would at once have been detected, and the treasure would have been seized by some other person. He must keep the secret till he could buy the field for his own, and then search for the treasure undisturbed.

He laboured hard till he had saved the necessary sum, and we can fancy how often he went and looked at the field, to make sure the treasure had not been disturbed.

It was just a common field to look at; sheep grazing in it, and the daisies and buttercups growing there, as elsewhere. Other people passed it by, and saw nothing particular, but for his part, he knew that the treasure was hidden deep down below.

At last he had got together the required price. He had sold everything he had in the world to make it up, but he knew the treasure was large enough to repay him, and he was so fearful that some one else would be beforehand with him. But no: his offer was accepted; he paid the money down, and the field was his! He set to work at once; he brought the plans which showed exactly where the treasure was buried, and having marked out the spot, he began to dig. But it lay deeper down than he had expected, and the soil was stiffer and harder to pierce than he was prepared for. It was hard work, and often he was inclined to throw aside pick-axe and shovel, and give it up in despair. But then the thought of the treasure came to encourage him. It was so large, and he knew for certain that it was there! Often, too, people, as they passed by, stopped and laughed at him for staying there day after day, digging for nothing! They called him a fool and a madman; but what did he care? He only went on and dug the harder.

Sometimes a neighbour would lean over the fence, and say: "Why don't you give it up? Even if something is buried there, it can't be worth all the labour you are spending on it. Are you not tired with that everlasting dig, dig—morning and evening—no rest and no change?"

And he would lean on his spade, and answer: "No; I shall not give it up. I am tired enough, it is true, and I have got nothing yet. Dig, dig, dig; truly it is weary work. But I know for certain that the treasure is there, that it is mine, and that I shall find it—that is enough for me; and if all the world were to try and draw me away, I should only go on and dig the harder."

Or another would say: "How much did you give for the field?"

"Everything I had in the world," he would reply; "I gave it *all*."

"And is it worth such a price, think you?"

"Sometimes, when I am very tired of digging, I think not; but one thought of the treasure is enough to revive me; and then—I know that it is mine!"

This "treasure" is a Religious Vocation. It is a treasure hidden. It does not blaze in the eyes of the world, in the shape of gold and jewels. It lies buried in a field, and a common sort of field to look at; and to purchase it, we have to pay a high price, even all that we have to give in this world. All our liberty, all our time, all our strength, all our heart; and that —even unto death. And we pay this price down before we are actually in possession of the treasure, for it lies deep, and we have to dig hard to get at it. We dig down into the ground of our own nature, with the sharp tools of mortification and obedience, of penance and prayer, of perseverance and patience in well-doing. One day's digging will not suffice; the greatness of the treasure only reveals itself in time, and in proportion as we have courage and patience to dig. Many times, no doubt, we are tempted to discouragement, and the enemy is not backward to whisper, "Was it worth all this?" And at such moments of temptation, when we recall all we have parted with in the past, and realise the labour and the constant renunciation required in the present, we may be disposed to doubt.

Then it needs only for us to ask ourselves: "What have we purchased at this cost? What, in fact, is the treasure which we have secured, even if we do not yet enjoy it?"

The treasure is nothing else than "the kingdom of heaven." What is meant by this?

In this world it means the dominion over self in every form; freedom of heart, and freedom of conscience. It means union with God, and having Him in exchange for perishable creatures. It means the deliverance from the snares and delusions both of the world and of the flesh. It means peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In the next life, we do not rightly know what it means, because eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man conceived what is there awaiting us. But this we know, that it means, first, the purification, and then the satisfaction of every desire; that all we can conceive, of truth, and beauty, and goodness, will be ours—and ours, world without end. If peace and joy, granted to us here by drops, and for passing moments, are yet so sweet that one such moment compensates for many desolate years, what will it be when peace and joy take full possession of our souls for eternity world without end?

But above all, it means this, and far more than this, because it means the possession and enjoyment of God Himself. He Himself is the "hidden treasure," the "reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1). He is our reward even here, and hereafter will be our everlasting reward.

Now, then, let us set all this before us, and ask ourselves once again: "Is not the treasure worth the price?" We have given ALL for it, and have we not done wisely? Shall we regret and withdraw our gift? Yet this is just what we are continually tempted to do, when one little sacrifice or another seems too hard for us, and we try to keep some little portion of our own will or our own judgment. If we do that we are not paying the full price, and till we do, the treasure will not be ours. Only those who do as the finder of the treasure did, will enter into the possession of it. He went, and for joy, "sold all that he had, and bought that field;" and if we would enter into possession of our treasure, we must do likewise.

III. *THE PEARL OF PRICE*

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls."—S. MATT. xiii. 45.

IN some respects this parable is very like that of the hidden treasure which indeed it immediately follows in S. Matthew's Gospel. The merchantman is seeking for goodly pearls; and among them he finds one which is so perfect for its size and lustre, that he sells all that he has to purchase it, and thinks, and thinks truly, that in doing so he has made a good bargain.

But it has some differences, and in particular it suggests the thought, alluded to a page or two back, that one thing of great perfection may outweigh in value almost any number of inferior objects. One saint does more for God's glory than a thousand ordinary Christians, and one act of heroic virtue is more precious and more fruitful than any number of imperfect acts. This consideration is of course of very great importance, and well meditated on, might lead to great results. For heroic virtue is not common; it implies difficulty overcome. The man who found the pearl of great price had to dive for it, and bring it up from the depths of the ocean at the risk of his life. Only when found and purchased, it was worth all he had suffered in acquiring it.

We will then take it that, as the hidden treasure signifies our vocation (whether religious or otherwise, but specially a religious vocation), so the pearl of great price is sanctity, our sanctification. It is indeed a precious pearl which has had to be brought up from a great depth. One went down into the deep waters to obtain it, for it was purchased for us by the Blood of Jesus.

But in another sense also, the pearl of sanctity was brought, and must be brought, from the depths of the ocean. To be a saint, we may or may not be endowed with all the virtues; at any rate, we may not have all in equal degree. But one is essential in this sense, that there is no degree of sanctity without it, that it almost stands as identical with sanctity, and is its measure and perfection—and this virtue is humility.

Our Lord only said of Himself, that He was meek and humble of heart, and our Blessed Lady declares that God, in choosing her to be His mother, had regarded nothing but the humility of His handmaid. The pearl among all precious stones seems to typify our Lady, by its purity and its lustre; it is also the figure of humility, the virtue most prominent in her who is Star of the Sea, *Ave Maris Stella.* We pray to her whose name is interpreted to mean "a bitter sea," and the pearl, the jewel of the sea, seems the fittest emblem of her sanctity.

There is another reason for associating the pearl with the double thought of our Lady and humility. Our Blessed Lady is the "Gate of Heaven"—Janua Cœli. Now in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem we read it had for its foundation twelve precious stones, all different; and it had twelve gates, but each gate was "one several pearl." There are, no doubt, many roads leading to heaven, but the gate which opens when we reach our term is always the same. It is always Mary's hand which opens the door. She is the mother of final perseverance; that priceless grace, which we cannot merit, but which we trust to obtain through her intercession. She it is to whom we fly to implore the grace of a happy death. "Pray for us now," we say, "and in the hour of our death." So she is to us the "Gate of Heaven."

But humility also must be the door to glory. We must learn that lesson, or the door will not open. We must learn it in death, if we have not learnt it in life. There will be no good in our bringing our little store of fancied merits and good works to the gate, if the pearl of humility is wanting; we may as well bring wood and straw and stubble. And so it is good for us, as we travel along the road, to sit awhile and rest our eyes on the pearly lustre of those heavenly gates which we see shining afar. Humility is indeed a pearl of price which we purchase at a great cost; but cost us what it may, it is worth all that we can give—for it is the indispensable condition of sanctity, the passport to the eternal city.

IV. *THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD*

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard."—S. MATT. xx. 1.

THERE was a certain householder, who had a large vineyard, for which he wanted workmen. These workmen he chose to hire—he would not use the labour of slaves; he would employ those only who chose to work of their own free will; and to them he would pay just wages. Early in the morning, therefore, he went out, and having found some labourers, he made his agreement with them, and sent them into his vineyard. They were men of good-will, honest and industrious, or they would not have been found ready to begin work at the break of day. And they went cheerfully and gladly, with the full purpose of keeping their bargain, and working from sunrise to sunset, and enduring all the heat and fatigue of the day.

They went early in the morning. Who does not know the charm and freshness of those early hours? The vineyard lay with the dew not yet brushed off from its leaves; the air was fresh and pleasant, and the world had not yet waked up around them, with its noise and distractions. They heard no sound but the piping of the early birds; it was that hour of prime, when the earth seems so full of prayer and worship, that we do not care to talk much, and by common consent these early hours are generally hours of silence.

And so, with peaceful hearts, they began their day's labour. But they were few in number whom the master found so early about; he wanted more labourers than these, and so at the third hour (answering to nine o'clock in the morning), he went out again, and this time he went to the market-place to find them. The business of the city had begun, and men seeking for hire were to be met with there, and they were glad enough when the householder addressed them, saying, " Go ye also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just."

He does not seem to have agreed with these for any particular sum, as he did with the first set of labourers, but he would give them whatever was just ; and the workmen trusted him and went to their work at once.

But still more were wanted. The vineyard was so large, and the householder was as industrious in seeking and finding labourers as they were in doing their work. " He went out again about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner." That is, remember, at noon, and at three in the afternoon. It would be but a short day's work, if the hours were reckoned, as seems to have been the case, from six to six. But such as it was, he hired them, and sent them to begin at once—and even then he was not satisfied. At the eleventh hour, at five o'clock, when the working day was drawing to a close, he passed the market-place, and found some still standing about. " Why stand you there all the day idle ? " he inquired. And they replied : " Because no man hath hired us." An ordinary master, a man of the world, would have told them, perhaps, that he would engage them for the next day. To hire them for the short time that remained of that day could be of very little service to the vineyard. But he was thinking more of the interests of the poor labourers than of the work done for himself. One hour's work, and its wages, were better to them than nothing at all ; and so, late as it was, he bade them also go into his vineyard ; only to them he said nothing at all about pay, and they left it to him to give them whatever he pleased.

And now, at last, the evening was come. The bell was rung, to tell the labourers that it was time to leave off work—welcome news to those who had been toiling since the morning—hardly so welcome to those who would fain have worked a little longer, if it were only to make up for their long hours of idleness. But there was no help for it, and the lord of the vineyard commanded his steward to call the labourers, and pay them their wages, beginning with those that were hired last. Those, therefore, who had been hired at the eleventh hour were called, and received every man a penny. It was generous pay for one hour of work, but this was like the munificent character of the lord; they had trusted to his generosity, and they were not disappointed. All the others were paid in like manner, and were content, with good reason, for they received a full day's wages, though they had not done a full day's work.

But when those came to be paid who had been hired first into the vineyard, they expected to have received more, and they murmured when they found they received only the sum that had been agreed upon. "They received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying, These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the heats."

But their murmurs availed them nothing. They had received the fair day's wages which had been agreed upon; they were not in any way defrauded. Their complaint then was that too much was done for the others. Their eye was evil because the lord of the vineyard was too good.

In this parable, no doubt, many things refer to the Jews and Gentiles, and the murmurs which would be raised by the former against the admission of the latter to equal privileges with themselves. Leaving this and other interpretations, we will try and draw from it a lesson of a different kind altogether.

The lord of the vineyard is Almighty God, Who, in His love of predilection, calls some souls into His service in the early morning of their life. And we all know how beautiful such lives are; there is nothing so beautiful as a life that has always belonged to God. When the young man in the Gospel said: "All these things have I observed from my youth; Jesus, looking on him, loved him" (S. Mark x. 20, 21). He could not do otherwise; there is a spiritual beauty in a soul which has been kept untarnished, which impresses itself on the very countenance; and commonplace as is the imagery which likens the early years of life to the early morning hours, it is one that is always beautiful. The foot of pride has not brushed away the morning dew; the heat of passion has not burnt up and withered the fresh herbage; the false maxims of the world have not broken in on that religious silence of the soul, with their discordant jargon. If, to the beauty of the morning of life, with all its tenderness, its trustfulness, and its spirit of joy, you add the noble element of self-devoted work in God's service, such a youth is beautiful indeed. And no doubt this is what all the baptized are meant to be—an upward growth from the tiny blade to the full ear. But it is not the case with all, or with the larger number. Souls are called to God's service at all ages, and by every variety of ways.

If we choose to take the call as signifying a vocation to religion, the beauty of such a call in the early morning of life is no less admirable. Here, probably, the greater number are so called; priests and religious seem for the most part chosen by God, and sent into His vineyard in early youth. And the wonderful grace of such a call is beyond our comprehension in this life. For it implies the grace of preservation, which must necessarily be greater than that of conversion. If, therefore, to such a grace are added those of fervour and perseverance, we have the most perfect ideal of Christian life. And there crowd in on our minds the thought of a glorious company of saints: S. Catherine, so called at the age of five; S. Aloysius; our Holy Father, S. Dominic; and above all, our Blessed Lady giving herself to God at her presentation.

But this ideal is not the invariable rule. And the fact that it is not so brings it about that in God's Providence there is an almost infinite variety in the forms of sanctity exhibited in the Church. The Church is like an immense garden, wherein grow not only the spotless lilies of innocence, but the ruddy roses of penance. Some plants are loaded with blossoms, and others are forest trees, with rough stems and gnarled and twisted boughs, thick with foliage, and displaying beauty of quite another kind. In other words, grace has no less variety than nature, and the manifestations of this variety are no less to the honour and glory of God. The sanctity of S. Augustine was not the same with that of S. Dominic or S. Thomas, but it is not for us to say which has most displayed the power of divine grace. Then there is another point that is noteworthy; those early labourers were not hired in the market-place: they came to the vineyard straight from their own rustic homes. The labourers of the sixth and ninth hours had been long standing in the busy thoroughfares of the city. And so those called very young have a happy ignorance of the world, which, though it be a blessing to them, may yet, in some cases, unfit them for the work of the apostolate. And how many souls have been touched and captured for God by the "Confessions" of S. Augustine, whose trials and struggles have seemed to be their own; yet such souls would have found no chord of sympathy in the "Divine Insinuations" of S. Gertrude! And thus souls are called differently, that they may be formed differently, and for a different kind of work.

But now for the labourers called at the eleventh hour. Could it really have been just to give them equal wages with the others? Was there not some reason in the murmurs of those who had borne the labour and heat of the whole long day?

In the first place, it was a question, not of the justice, but of the beneficence of the Lord of the Vineyard. He had, as he says, a right to do as he willed. And having kept his agreement with those he had hired first, and paid them fair wages, they should have rejoiced, and not have complained of his generosity to others.

But how is it with souls called very late to God's service? Do they really receive as great a reward as those who have served Him from their youth upwards? Whether they do or not we cannot tell. It is enough for us if we know that they may do so, and if we understand when and how this can be. The penitent thief passed from the cross to paradise; he had no purgatory. S. Peter, only a few days after he had denied his Lord, was given the command to feed His sheep—as it would seem, in reward of his love. S. Mary Magdalen, "the sinner," is preferred to her sister Martha. The fact is not to be denied, but how can it be explained?

We must remember that God estimates things more by quality than quantity. One diamond is worth more than a million crystals. And perfection acquired and practised but a short time is more precious than mediocrity that lasts a century. Now we can conceive it possible, and even likely, that the labourers who went to their work very early worked fairly, but in a leisurely sort of way. They had the whole day before them. They were not going to defraud the householder; they would do their pennyworth of labour, but there was no reason they should do more. On the other hand, the labourers who had come later, and felt their pay depended on what they could do, would exert themselves to do as much as ever they could. The householder had made no agreement with them, except that he would pay them "whatever was just"; and so the more work they did, the more likely they were to get a full day's wages.

But what is one to say of those who were called at the eleventh hour? Was there any hope that they could make up for the long hours of the day, during which they had "stood idle?" Perhaps not: but anyhow they would feel an ardent desire to do so, and to recompense in some way the generosity of Him Who had hired them so late. And so they would throw into their one hour of work an ardour, an enthusiasm, a devotedness, which might seem even ridiculous to those about them; and what is yet more to the purpose, this ardent labour would not be entirely in hope of pay, but from a feeling of loving gratitude to their good benefactor.

Now, to apply all this. Not necessarily, of course, but often, it may quite naturally happen that the souls who have always served God, if they have preserved their purity, are nevertheless somewhat wanting in fervour. It was so even with that young man who had kept all the commandments from his youth upward, and whom Jesus loved in consequence. He thought he desired to be perfect, but when the conditions of perfection were put before him, he could not embrace them. He was content with the law; he had not love enough or fervour enough to sell all for God. Compare him with S. Paul, struck down by God's grace when he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ." When he is converted, his life becomes all for love. Nothing can separate him from the love of Jesus. The remembrance that he was once a persecutor is a continual spur to him. He was called "at mid-day"—at the sixth hour—in the great heat and the blinding glare of the noonday sun. In the six hours' work that remained to him, who can doubt that the Apostle of the Gentiles accomplished a full day's work?

But now suppose a soul, either called at the eleventh hour, or, having been called earlier, to have neglected the call, and then, only one hour before sunset, to wake up to the consciousness that the day is fast closing in, and only one hour remains! And suppose that that soul comes to this consciousness, not of itself, but because the householder seeks it out in some special way, and gives it one more invitation, one more chance. For I think that in this parable we do not generally pay sufficient attention to the unwearied labour of the lord of the vineyard; if his labourers toiled, so did he. He went out each hour; at noon perhaps the men rested, but he did not rest; at the sixth hour, as at the ninth, he was in the market-place, seeking for labourers. And who is shown us here but that merciful Master, Who said of Himself that He had come to seek and to save those that were lost?

So a soul, negligent and unfaithful for fifty or sixty years, is sought by our Lord, and given another chance. No matter how and where He seeks her out and finds her. He points to the sun so near its setting, and He whispers to her once more, "Why stand you here all the day idle?" "It is too late," she may reply. "Had I answered the call earlier, something might have been done, but now my chance is over. How can I in one short hour make up for the idleness of the whole past day?" But He will take no excuse, and, late as it is, He says to her, as He said to the others, "Go ye also into my vineyard." Go now, do not lose another hour or another moment, for there is yet one hour in which to work. It is the same who gave the command, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

Is there yet time? And can we in so short a time repair the losses of the past? This is the capital question for such souls to ask themselves. Now here is the answer which holy writers give us. Time is nothing to God. Fervour is everything. To the question, "Can lost years be replaced?" they answer, "No, if you attend only to fulfilling the law; yes, if you embrace perfection." S. Ignatius tells us that "One intense act is worth a thousand halting and weak ones, and that a diligent man attains a height quickly which a sluggard cannot scale in a long course of years." Finally, Lancisius, quoting this from S. Ignatius, adds that we expiate sin by intense acts, when we offer our actions and all their details to God with much love. In the language of our Lord Himself, S. Mary Magdalen was forgiven much, because she loved much. And it was one such intense act of love that procured her forgiveness, and transformed her from a sinner to a saint.

Here then is the final issue of the parable. Let it bring joy and courage, and hope and gratitude to the poor labourers of the eleventh hour. But above all, let it bring them love—love for the generous Master Who sought them out in their abandonment, and now is ready to reward so magnificently their short term of service. If the love is only there, their service, short as it must be in time, will be full of vigour and devotedness and self-sacrifice. They will not care for themselves, they will think only what they can do to testify their love, and to atone for the long years that have been lost. And He Who inspires the love will not fail to give the reward.

V. *THE TEN TALENTS*

S. MATT. XXV.

THIS is one of our Lord's parables which appeals to our hearts, because it deals with matters which come under our daily observation, viz., the different gifts granted to different souls, and the different ways in which they make use of them.

S. Gregory has a singular and interesting explanation. He says, that by the five talents are implied the five senses, *i.e.*, all outward knowledge; by the two, wit and work; by the one, understanding, which all men have in some degree. These are the natural intellectual gifts bestowed on us, to some less to some more. But the sole reason for which they are given is that we may gain others—*i.e.*, supernatural talents. They are simply doubled, because every natural gift must be supernaturalised by grace, that is, doubled, or repeated in a divine order. The servant with one talent did not waste it; he even carefully preserved it. He may then have cultivated it in the natural order, but he did not use it as the Divine Giver meant him to do; he did not make it fruitful in the supernatural order. He failed to use it in such sort as to form his soul to the divine likeness, and raise it up to God: hence he was condemned as a slothful and unprofitable servant.

This is a very startling interpretation. Intellectual gifts then may be cultivated; but, if not used so as to raise a man to God, they are just talents hidden in a napkin, and nothing more. Every natural gift is intended to have its attendant supernatural development. The skill of our hands, the power of our minds, the affection of our hearts; our influence with others, our power of attracting, or advising, or leading, or commanding; our power of loving, or making ourselves loved—all these things are talents not merely to be used, but used in a supernatural order, producing supernatural fruits.

There we see a glimpse of the real distinction between natural and supernatural virtues. There are not two sets of gifts; all gifts are from God. Whether they are supernaturalised or not, means only, do we use them for Him? A primrose in the bank may be used supernaturally, and have a supernatural power, if, when we look at it, it raises our hearts to God. The flowers in the field all have their voices with which they call out, "Love God." S. Paul of the Cross heard these voices, and used to say, "Be quiet, I know what you would say." So of little acts of men, little gifts, little capacities of doing or suffering—a little pain, a little disappointment. It may make us sour and bitter, or we may smile at it, and love it, and so step with it nearer to God.

Oh! these talents, how they abound in life! we cannot count them up. I knew a child, and one not a Catholic, who had to have a tooth out, and the dentist was stupid or flurried, and got it out hanging by a bit of skin; and he took a pair of scissors and cut the skin. She never even groaned. Her father took her on his knee, and asked her how she could have borne it without crying out. She replied, "Why, you know, papa, I thought it was nothing to what our Lord had to bear!" So she made a talent of that little tooth.

I knew another, a young officer in the army, who had a loud strong voice, and he used it in giving the word of command to his soldiers; but one day he noted in his journal: "On drill to-day—thanked God for my loud voice." He had made his voice a talent. He was tempted for a moment to be proud of his little gift; but he gave it to God, and so it became a talent.

VI. *THE PRODIGAL SON*

S. LUKE XV. 11-32.

THE fifteenth chapter of S. Luke's Gospel contains one of our Lord's parables, of which one may say without fear, that it has gone to the heart of every reader, as, possibly, no other page in the Gospels has ever done.

The parable of the prodigal is the gospel of penitent sinners. Not the story of Magdalen at our Lord's feet, or S. Peter in the prætorium, or the thief on the cross, surpasses it in its power. We have the whole history from first to last of the fall, and the misery, and the repentance, and the return, and of the acceptance of a soul, of which every one in turn may say, "This history is of me!"

There was a certain man, an honest man, living in the midst of his substance and his labour, with fields and barns, and servants and cattle—an honest, working life. He had two sons. He brought them up to share his own life, and to work in the home work with him. A happy home life; but the youngest was not content with it. He was restless, unsettled, and selfish. He wanted to see the world, to have less work and more pleasure, and above all, to be his own master. That is the first point which touches our conscience; that is the poison which enters into so many dreams of youth, when we are not content with the duties and realities that are before us, but would fain wander off into something which our imagination depicts as so much brighter and better, but in which, if we could honestly analyse it, self and independence figure as the true centre.

It does not appear as if the youth had a mother living; but if he had, it would have made no difference. He had got the selfish longing in his heart, and he did not try to control it. "Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me;" as if he were claiming a right, not asking a favour; taking it as if it belonged to him, and as if his father could not keep it back. His father did not refuse it to him. He would let him have his way. We do not know all that had gone before this. Probably the father had tried his best, and saw that nothing would satisfy his son till he had had his desire. So without reproach he divided to them, that is, justly to both his sons, their inheritance. The elder son, however, remained with his father, and continued as before to work with him in his farm and share the old home life. But the younger gathered all he had together, and went abroad into a far country. Far away—far from home and all its memories—far from the old life, so sweet and so sacred—far from his father—

far from God ! There he spent all he had, and wasted everything, living riotously.

I suppose in its literal sense it is the history of many and many a foolish young life that takes no thought of anything, save the gratification of the moment and of the senses. But even those who stop short of the literal sense know what it is to spend all that they have on what does not satisfy, and leaves them empty and miserable. Empty affections, empty ambitions, empty repinings. How many years in every life pass in such things, and are lost to eternity ! It is not only such as the prodigal who must accuse themselves of "wasting their substance," but all souls who on looking back, and "sweeping their spirit" in the night watches, find year after year given up to wasted time, wasted talents, wasted opportunities, wasted graces, wasted warnings —what have we not wasted ? It seems as though nothing were left of our life to give to God but broken scraps not worth His acceptance.

The prodigal forgot God, but God did not forget him. And He showed His remembrance of him by sending a mighty famine into the land. Then in the torment of hunger that poor soul began to be in want. That was the moment of mercy. He had had all he desired, and it had not satisfied him. Pleasure, self-pleasing, and self-will all left him hungering for something better. Who does not know what it is so to hunger ? We call it longing—a disappointment, when we turn with loathing from things which once seemed so full of charm and feel they are all like Dead Sea apples, full of ashes and bitterness. A mighty famine indeed, but we must do something to fill that terrible void. And so we try to do it by hiring ourselves out to something base and vile. The prodigal, with all his dainty ideas of pleasure and enjoyment, is keeping the filthy swine, and glad enough to feed on their husks. Yet he had not so utterly lost the memory of his old home and the noble-ness of his instincts as to be satisfied with the husks. They had been obscured for a time, but the very depth of his misery brought back better thoughts. He returned to himself. Yes: every penitent is a return. He heard the voice crying within him: "Return, return, O Sulamitess, return, return!" (Cant. vi. 12). Return to grace, return to life, return to your father's home; return to God.

At first it was simply the thought of his own misery, compared with the ease and comfort which he had left behind him at home, and which he might have been that moment enjoying, if he had not chosen deliberately to turn his back on it. That was the cry of self and of nature, of the poor starving self. But grace was there too, and whispered the words: "Return, return!" No doubt it was a hard struggle. "What! go back and humble myself, and acknowledge that I have been all wrong, and perhaps meet only with reproaches and rebuffs! No; that would be too much. I can stay here in this far country, and turn over a new leaf, and live respectably. That is surely all that can be expected of me." But the voice went on repeating, "Return, return!"

"Return to my father? He would not receive me, or if he did, it would not be as a son." Still, return, return! A servant in the father's house is better than to be here keeping swine. And besides, was he not doing his father injustice? had he ever really known the tenderness of that father's heart? Then came memories of his childhood, and he began to see and understand what until then had been all hidden away under the clouds of his own selfishness.

How his father had loved him! What indulgence he had always shown him! He had despised his father, been weary of his rule, fretted against his correction—but he saw now how it was all full of love. The fault had been all on his own side—the miserable love of independence. And what had come of it? Just these swine's husks—this grovelling, filthy, debased, miserable life; a slavery among vile beasts. Then came the thought of home; the sweet hay-fields, the golden harvest-times; the farmyard full of life and honourable labour; the horses and cattle, and the going to and fro of old servants, who were all like old friends. The bright home kitchen, and the hearth beside which the family had so often gathered together in summer and winter. The family meals; all the affection and trustfulness, and the sweet tranquil days —and he in the far land! Did they still remember him, or was his name put away and never mentioned, as the single dark blot on that happy family life? He could bear it no longer. "I will arise and go to my father." I will acknowledge all, I will take whatever he gives; I will be a servant, not a son, but anyway I will go to him; I will return and trust myself to him, and with whatever he lays on me I will be content.

So rising up, he went to his father. It was rising up indeed. That acceptance of the humiliation was a true rising. We never rise so high as when we lower ourselves to confess our fault. Now it would be much if his father receives him and forgives him. He has brought disgrace and anguish to his home. He has wasted all his substance, and only comes back now because he is starving. If his father had waited till he stood at his door, in his rags and misery, and then had given him a sharp reproof, and taken him back as a hired servant, it would have been more than he deserved.

But that was not how it happened. That day the old man had felt his heart strangely moved. Something whispered to him: "Your son is returning; he is leaving the far country; he is coming home. He is even now on the road, coming nearer and nearer." The father could not rest; he would go and meet him. Perhaps his heart might fail him, and he would turn back again. Poor boy ! he might not have the courage, after all, to face his father's anger. " Then I will go and meet him half-way—I will look for him and bring him back ; he shall know that I am still his father, and that he is still dear to me as a son."

So he went forth, and climbed the nearest hill, and looked along the road by which his son might be expected. There, still a long way off, he saw in the distance the form of a ragged beggar, crawling along, weak and fearful. No one surely would recognise, under such a form, the youth who, a few years ago, rode forth from his father's house, so gay and gallant. But his father's eyes recognised him at once, and moved with compassion, whilst he was still a great way off, running to him, the old man met his son half-way, and falling on his neck, kissed him.

Could the son have dreamed of such a reception as this ? Could any one have believed it possible ? Was it not weak, foolish, over-kind, over-indulgent ? No doubt the world would say so. It was encouraging the good-for-naught in his bad ways. He had only to ask, and forsooth, all would be forgotten. No—no one ever would dream of such a reception as God gives to the penitent sinner. All his sins blotted out, all his former merits restored. Floods of consolation (the father's kiss) poured into his soul. Everything to encourage and comfort him. The only fear on the side of his father being, that he will not sufficiently believe in his love.

We never do God justice ; we never sufficiently magnify His goodness. Our fault is that we never have confidence enough, and that we never half trust the boundless tenderness of the Sacred Heart.

But we must go through it all, word by word, step by step. First, then, see that this poor prodigal had received a great grace, and was faithful to it. He was truly and sincerely humble. The sight of his father's inconceivable goodness did not move him from a sense of his own unworthiness. It only made him feel it more. As he felt when he was among the swine, so he felt now, and so he spoke.

" Father, I have sinned—I am not worthy to be called thy son." Here was confession, contrition, and compunction. But his father would not hear him to the end. He had meant to add, " make me as one of thy hired servants," but before he could speak the words his father stopped him. They had reached home by this time, and the poor prodigal had the shame of standing there before the door, clad in his rags, and looking lower than any of the meanest of his father's cowboys. He did not shrink from the humiliation, but his father would not expose him to it. " Bring the first robe," he says, " and put it on him, and a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet "—for indeed he was barefoot. " The first robe," the robe of baptism, soiled long ago, and now restored by penance. The filthy rags cast away, everything given back—innocence, purity, peace. But that is not half enough. " Bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry."

Beyond the literal sense, touching as it is, of this father rejoicing over the returned prodigal, we see a deeper meaning still. He was received, not only to the first robe, but to a mysterious feast, which can be no other than the Eucharistic Feast of Love. Not only is all forgotten and forgiven, but he is taken to the close embrace of love. They ate, and gave thanks and rejoiced. It was the very mystery of love and salvation.

The elder son is in the field, and hears the sounds of joy and festivity. He asks what it all means, and hears that the outcast has returned, and that his father is rejoicing over him. And he is offended. Well, to the mere sense of flesh and blood there is something to be angry about. All the years that he had served his father he had never had any feast made over him. He had been faithful, loyal, well-behaved, but it had all been taken as a matter of course. Now, the good-for-nothing prodigal returns, and they cannot make enough of him. So he is angry, and will not go in. Well-behaved, good, respectable people have sometimes a fund of self in them. They have their virtues, truly enough, but they have their vices also. And one of their most common vices is a certain hardness of heart for those who are not so well-behaved as themselves. They fail just in the very point which makes souls Christ-like. He was the friend of sinners. He had His arms always open to receive and embrace them. He never repelled them ; never was cold, or harsh, or severe, except to pharisaical hypocrisy—but never to penitent sinners.

There is often a touch of the Pharisee in good people which makes them very odious. Perhaps it would be good for them if they had fallen into more exterior faults, if it had given them a more compassionate heart for those weaker than themselves.

But the father is as full of goodness for his elder son as for his younger. He did not say : " Well, if he does not choose to come in, he may stay out ; " but he came out himself, and " began to entreat him." Just as he had gone to meet his penitent child when he was yet a long way off, so now he tries to restore his elder son to a happier temper, and drive away the cloud of sullenness. Not but that the son had something to say, as far as reason went. He had served him all these years, and never transgressed any of his commandments, and nothing had been done to show him any special honour ; but now, when the one who had disgraced them all returns, nothing is too good for him. Is this just ? No ; God is not weighing in the scales of justice when He deals with penitents. If the poor sinner had only had justice, no touch of grace would have softened his heart. He would have died in his misery and sin.

It is no question at all of justice, but only of a father's love. And with all his faults the prodigal had trusted himself to that love, and for such as do so, there is no condemnation. "They shall not be confounded for ever." Why, the elder son was not trusting his father half as much. He was judging him to be hard and unkind. We are not meant to suppose really and truly that God loves sinners better than the just, that it is better to abandon Him and repent, than to abide faithful from first to last. If such a notion as that crossed the mind of the eldest son, he must have been set right by his father's words, words of such deep loving assurance. "Son, thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine." That is, after all, the portion of the faithful soul. But still it was fit that we should rejoice over this poor soul, "because he was dead, and is alive again—he was lost, and is found."

Here is the sum of the whole matter. Sin is death; it is the loss of the soul. The grace of return to God is a miracle of the same order as that which raises a dead man to life. Has any soul ever fallen from God mortally, and repented and been brought back to grace? If so, that soul is as truly raised from the dead as Lazarus was, or the widow's son. Let us think of that when we call to mind the memory of our sins and of God's mercy towards us. We have been down into the tomb, with darkness and corruption, and God in His victorious love has called us back to life. Well may we rejoice and give thanks, for in Heaven, before the presence of God Himself, angels also are rejoicing over us!

VII. *THE GRAIN OF WHEAT*

"Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—S. JOHN xii. 24, 25.

THIS passage, with the verses following, was, in the first place, a prophecy, spoken by our Lord of His own death, and the fruit that would spring therefrom. For it was by His death that He was to purchase life for the world. It is wonderful to think that, as men estimate success, His life bore little fruit. All His preaching, all His labours, all His miracles had not converted Judea, or gathered together followers enough to people one of its smallest villages. We read of the vast multitudes who followed Him to hear the word: of the thousands whom He fed miraculously, and the crowds who went before Him into Jerusalem, and we think of all these as His disciples; but it really was not so. When the whole number of the faithful was gathered together at Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost, they numbered no more than one hundred and twenty souls!

But—He died! And dying, He ascended into Heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to found the Church. His Apostles went through the world and preached His Cross and Passion—and the world was converted! The grain of wheat died, and by its death brought forth much fruit.

As with our Lord, so also with the Church herself. The Faith was propagated, not merely by the preaching of Apostles, but yet more by the death of her Martyrs. They were burnt: they were crucified; they were buried alive; they were thrown to the wild beasts. they gave up their lives by hundreds and thousands, and everywhere the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. It has continued to be so to this day. A soil well watered with Christian blood, be it China, or Japan, or the Isles of the Ocean, is certain, sooner or later, to bear its golden harvest and to stand thick with corn. It is the law of spiritual propagation.

But more than this. All our Lord's life, and the mysteries of His life and death, contain in themselves great principles.

And in the spiritual order there is no principle of more universal application than this, that the grain of wheat must DIE, if we desire that it should bring forth fruit. What does this principle mean ?

First, let us look at the image itself, and the precise words in which our Lord presents it to us. "Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground, and die, itself remaineth alone."

The grain of wheat : one grain. Let us take a single grain in our hand and look at it. Can anything be conceived smaller, more insignificant. What can you do with a single grain ? It would not supply food for the smallest bird of the air. It is just nothing, or next to nothing ; except, indeed, that it possesses a germ of life. But to make that germ grow, the grain of wheat must first fall into the ground and die. It must fall into the ground—the *humus*. What an expression of humility and humiliation ! It must not be exalted, but it must fall and be buried.

Nor is that enough. Buried in the earth, it must die, or at any rate, pass through a transforming change, which is the likeness of death. It must lose its old life, its old form and manner of existence ; all that must become nothing, and return to dust, that the new life of that little germ may spring forth in new and beautiful forms. And if this is done, up from the grave of that little buried grain will spring five or six graceful stalks, each bearing its ears, loaded with forty, sixty, or a hundred grains ; and if these be sown again, it will not be long before the one grain, which was nothing, and worth nothing, "abiding alone," will by its death have multiplied and brought forth fruit, and have yielded a field of golden waving corn, and an abundant harvest.

There is the image, and the application is not difficult. We are each one the grain of wheat, insignificant enough, and yet, each one containing a germ of life. Given the grace of God and the adhesion of our own will, there is in each one of us the possibility of sanctity. Who knows what there is in himself or in another ?

There may be within him the possibility of the life of an apostle or the death of a martyr. All the labours of S. Vincent of Paul, all the teaching of S. Thomas, all the monastic life which sprang out of the rule of S. Benedict, once lay, a hidden germ, in the souls of these servants of God, and had they remained *alone*, that germ would never have developed, and the mighty harvests of their lives would never have been reaped. There was a time when S. Francis Xavier was a gay student at Paris, having no thought beyond the worldly career, which seemed to lie before him. Yet within him lay hidden the career of the Apostle of the Indies. To develop that germ, what a change, as of death, must pass over him ! He must fall into the ground indeed, and die ; and he refused not so to do. He gave all and he abandoned all, and so doing, we know that he brought forth much fruit, and gathered a harvest of souls into the heavenly garner.

It was so with others, and in our way and proportion, it must be so, and has been so with ourselves. For in each of us there is a something which our Lord in many places calls "our life," and which He says we must "hate," and "lose," if we would keep it unto life eternal. It is not our mortal life, but it is the life of self ; that internal core of our nature to which we cling, and which we love and cannot tear ourselves from. Yet our Lord says that not only must we hate father and mother, and brother and sister, but our own life also ; and if we do not, we cannot be His disciples. And in the very verse following the text, He says : "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." This is evidently not a bodily, but an interior life. It is that central germ of self, out of which proceed the motives of our exterior acts. Self-value, self-esteem, self-judgment, self-complacency, self-will. Our own interests, our own likings and dislikings, our tastes our freedom, our sympathies and antipathies; all this has to fall into the ground and die. In other words, it must be humbled and mortified, as the absolute condition of our "bringing forth much fruit." And observe that if it does not so die, "it abideth alone." What an expression! You, in your weakness and nothingness, would set to work to minister to souls, to teach, to train, to instruct; to undertake great works for God—alone! You would have for your assistants only your own cleverness and your own capacity of perseverance. And what would they be worth? You have not light enough or steadiness enough to take two steps without support, and yet you are ready to set out on the long march—alone! No wonder if you break down, and your best efforts come to nothing, and your fine plans fail, and you have to chew the bitter cud of disappointment, because you would not die, and so the little grain of wheat was not multiplied.

"But," you will say, "how can we die? We cannot do this of ourselves." No, certainly not. But if one thing is more sure than another, it is that God always provides the machinery for putting nature to death. Death, even the death of the cross, is always awaiting us. We, who live under the easy yoke of a religious rule, may find this death in a life of obedience, which is the death of self-will; and in a life of penance, which is the death of self-indulgence; and in a life of humility, which is the death of pride and self-judgment. We may crucify our selfishness by fraternal charity, and our indolence by observance and punctuality. In fact, the cross is always waiting at our door; the furrow of our daily life and daily rule is ever open, into which to cast the grain of wheat. Rightly regarded, it is a very easy cross. Compare it with the strange sufferings which seem necessary, and are provided for souls living in the world, and hindered in their course by a thousand obstacles, from which we, by the very condition of our state, are delivered, and you will, indeed, give thanks to God for bringing you under His light yoke and easy burden.

But still, nature must die ; and what we need to nerve our resolution is confidence in the promises of God. His word stands sure : " If it die, it shall bring forth much fruit." We should bring home our sheaves, rejoicing. The death of self will always, and infallibly, prove to be the forerunner of a new and glorious life of grace. You give up an attachment, and you gain freedom of heart. You give up self-judgment, and lo ! you find your interior flooded with peace and tranquillity. You renounce wishes and longings after one or another form of happiness, and a joy of which you never so much as dreamed before flows in on you like a torrent. You consent to be nothing and to do nothing, if God so wills, and He takes delight in putting into your hands a power, and raising you to some sphere of work altogether unlooked for.

All these things are only the common and ordinary issue of that death to which the grain of wheat at last submits. It falls into its little furrow, and dies, in whatever manner God so wills, and there it lies ; the winter passes with its frost and bitter cold, and spring dawns at last, bringing the scents and sounds of a re-awakening ; and lo ! the green blade appears, and then the tender shoot ; after that, the full ear, and the abundant hundred-fold.

All that we need is courage and confidence. May the Lord of the harvest give us these, and then, when, and where, and as He will, the grain of wheat will joyfully fall into its furrow, and suffer the change and transformation of this blessed death to pass over it.

II. ON THREE OF OUR LORD'S MIRACLES

VIII. *THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES*

S. Matt. xiv., xv.; S. Mark vi.; S. Luke ix.;
S. John vi.

Our Lord had been engaged in teaching the people arguing with the Scribes and Pharisees, and working miracles. It had been a time of unusual work and fatigue, as we learn from the words of S. Mark, who says that "there were many coming and going, so that they had not so much as time to eat" (vi. 31).

Our Lord, therefore, proposed to His disciples to take the only kind of rest He ever allowed Himself—a brief time of retirement in a solitary place among the mountains: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little" (vi. 31).

To reach this desert or solitude they had to cross the lake, as it would seem, to be more out of the way of the people. S. Matthew tells us that it was among the mountains, near the Sea of Galilee (xv. 29), and S. John observes that "there was much grass in the place" (vi. 10). S. Mark also speaks of the "green grass." All this helps to bring the scene before our mind's eye, a scene such as many with which we are familiar—a silent solitary place among the hills, with grassy banks and mounds interspersed among the rocks, the bees humming among the beds of thyme, the wild birds going in and out of the clefts of the rock, and below, perhaps, the blue Sea of Galilee, across which they had come, with its waves breaking on the shore, so often trodden by the Master's feet.

And having come there, says S. Matthew, "He sat down." So, many a time, have we sat in some grassy solitude amidst the hills, resting in the vision of the beautiful places of earth, singing our *Benedicite* in union with the birds of the air, and the fountains, and the green things of the earth; for truly these things all praise Him and speak to us of Him, and bring us rest and refreshment as they bring us the thought of Him. And it is pleasant to know that this was the rest and refreshment which our Lord chose for Himself and His disciples. " Come into the desert and rest awhile."

But their rest was not for long. The people had seen them entering the boat and crossing the lake, and " came to Him in great multitudes, bringing with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, and many others," casting them down before Him, and entreating Him to heal them. S. Mark, in his vivid, picturesque language, says they ran together on foot, from all the cities and villages round about, and that some of them were there even before our Lord arrived. He was weary and worn, and yet they had no thought, no compassion for what He was enduring. They thought only of their own needs, not of His. But He had compassion on them. And it is worth remarking that the word is repeated again and again by the Evangelists. S. Matthew uses it in speaking of both the multiplications. " Jesus had compassion on the multitudes." So also S. Mark and S. Luke; and the second time S. Matthew places the word itself on our Lord's lips: " I have compassion on the multiude."

To understand why He had compassion on them we must consider a little. The multitude on both occasions was very large; four thousand at one time, and five at another. They had come on foot, bringing their sick with them; our Lord had to minister to them all. Now, if we try and put before us five thousand persons, we shall have to imagine a larger crowd than perhaps we have ever seen gathered together in one place. If we had such a crowd gathered about us, all claiming our attention and help, we should readily understand the time it would take, how long some would have to wait before they could get near our Lord, and the consequent fatigue and exhaustion. For they had come unprovided: "They have now continued with Me three days, and have nothing to eat."

Why did they not go away, return to their own villages, and bring provisions? Seemingly, they did not so much as think of it. The gracious presence, the words, the wonderful power of Him round whom they were gathered, held them captive, absorbed all their faculties, and made them unmindful of their own necessities.

But if they were unmindful of their own wants, He was not unmindful of them. "I have compassion on the multitudes, for they have now been with Me three days, and have not what to eat; I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (S. Matt. xv. 32). S. Mark adds that He said, "for some of them came from afar off" (S. Mark viii. 3).

Here we pause, and watch the great multitude, scattered in groups on the grassy hills around, and our Lord standing apart with His disciples, beholding them with compassion. There was something so tender and individual in His manner of thus beholding them. A crowd of five thousand persons would be to us a crowd of strange unknown faces. But it was not so to Him. He knew each one individually; He knew where each one came from: "Some of them came from afar off." He knew the long road they would have to travel home, foot-sore; He knew the mountain-paths by which they had come.

Five thousand human faces were not more for Him to know than five would have been, for "He knoweth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names" (Ps. cxlvi. 4). He saw not only their faces, but their hearts. They were all His children, and He had compassion on them all.

S. Luke tells us that "the day began to decline," and that the disciples entreated our Lord to send the people away into the neighbouring villages, that they might get lodgings and food. He also tells us that our Lord had not only healed their sick, but had " received them, and spoken to them of the kingdom of God." What wonder that they could not tear themselves away! O Jesus! if Thou wert waiting for us in some solitary place among the hills, waiting to receive us sweetly, and sitting there to speak to us of the kingdom of God, should not we also forget to eat?

The kingdom of God! And that, spoken of by Thy voice, in Thy words, with those compassionate looks of Thine—what would three days seem? Would they not pass like moments!

The disciples continue to press Him to send the people away, but He replies, " Give you them to eat." What a command! They have no more than five loaves and two fishes—" what is that among so many?" Or perhaps He means them to go and buy provisions; but even so, how could they get enough " for all this multitude"?

S. John gives the incident more exactly when he says, that, in their perplexity, S. Andrew observed: " There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are these among so many?" This boy, we may note in passing, who was to behold with his own eyes, and bear witness to the coming miracle, was destined, according to tradition, to be an apostle, or a follower of the apostles—S. Martial.

Whatever the disciples thought, and little as they were prepared for the mighty work about to be wrought, it is evident they were ready to obey our Lord to the letter. He bids them " make the men sit down." This was no easy command to carry out, for the order had to be conveyed to the five thousand men, who were to be seated in some kind of order. S. John says, " there was much grass in the place;" and S. Mark tells us that they sat down " on the green grass, in ranks, by hundreds and fifties." It was by so arranging them, probably, that the disciples came to know how many there were.

Then our Lord took the loaves first—and with what beautiful order, with a kind of ritual beauty, was the miracle wrought ! He took the bread into His sacred Hands, and looking up to Heaven, He blessed and broke. We know, from S. John's Gospel, that it was in truth a type, a foreshadowing of the sacramental banquet which He was afterward to dispense. Watch Him raising His divine eyes to Heaven, listen to His words of benediction. Behold His sacred Hands, dispensing the bread, first to His apostles, and through them to the people—and this, doubtless, not without mystery, as signifying that His priests should be the ministers of that more sacred banquet, which should henceforth be dispensed to the faithful through their hands. But keep your eyes on Him, and watch Him, and recognise in Him the Master of Nature, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, to whom nothing is impossible ; and adore His power, His providence, and His compassion.

The miracle is over. All have been fed to the full ; the very fragments of the meal fill twelve baskets. No doubt there are exclamations of wonder and surprise. But He will not allow the multitude to remain and talk of it ; He will not even let His disciples stay and hear their words of gratitude. He obliges them immediately to get into the boat and return across the lake, while He remains alone and dismisses the multitude.

And when they were all gone, " He Himself went up into the mountain to pray." That is, He withdrew Himself from all human observation, and sought repose, after His three days and nights of incessant labour, in the prayer of God.

IX. *BLIND BARTIMEUS*

"Bartimeus, the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the wayside begging."—S. MARK x. 46.

THE miracle here narrated is told us by all three of the first Evangelists, and in meditating upon it we can put the three narratives into one, noting their differences. S. Matthew says there were two blind men (xx. 30); the others only name one (S. Luke xviii. 35). S. Mark alone gives his name. All mention that it was on the road going to Jericho. The narratives of S. Mark and S. Luke, taken together, are the fullest, so let us follow them.

Bartimeus is called "the blind man." He was evidently well known to the multitude and the neighbourhood as the blind beggar of those parts. It was his custom, as it would seem, to sit by the wayside, on that particular road, begging. His life must have been very low and miserable; a blind wayside beggar, such as one sees sitting on the steps of the Trinità in Rome, ragged, miserable, and forlorn. Jericho, the image of the world, was a populous, busy place, with many coming and going; and the great thoroughfares leading to it would be likely resorts for such poor creatures, who lived on alms. We can fancy Bartimeus sitting there, wrapped in his wretched cloak, and when he heard any one passing, raising his voice, in the well-known beggar's tone, to beg for a trifle, which was sometimes flung to him, and as often refused. But there he sat in all weathers—the blind beggar of Jericho.

On this day, besides the tramp of ordinary passers-by, he heard a more unusual noise; the rush of a great multitude approaching. Some were running as though to catch an unwonted sight; others loitered near, and spoke in groups around him. His blindness made his ears all the quicker to catch the unaccustomed sounds, and he asked those beside him what it was. They replied that " it is Jesus of Nazareth, Who is passing by," and a great multitude, as was their wont, accompanying Him. For Jesus had been visiting Jericho, and the fame of His preaching and miracles was in every one's mouth, and had no doubt reached the ears of Bartimeus also. Jesus of Nazareth. The Son of David ! He Who went about healing the sick, and giving sight to the blind. He was passing by. Would He look on his misery, and cure him ? Why not ? If only he could attract His attention, and touch His compassionate heart.

But how could he make himself known or seen ? The crowd was so great, thronging the road, and shutting him off from view. He could not rise and push through them, and so force his way to our Lord's presence, but he could at least cry aloud and beg to be heard. He never doubted the power of our Lord to heal him, for He was not only " Jesus of Nazareth," but " The Son of David "—that is, the promised deliverer, the Prophet, the Messiah ; the poor blind beggar knew that much, and he had faith, and so he began to cry aloud : " Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me ! "

The people round about told him to hold his peace. What did they care for the blind beggar ? He was just fit to be thrust into the ditch, pushed aside, out of sight. They wanted to see and to hear Jesus of Nazareth, and the crying of the beggar annoyed them. So they rebuked him, that he should hold his peace ; but he cried out a great deal the more : " Son of David, have mercy on me ! " The kindness or unkindness of the multitude was not much to Bartimeus. But one thing concerned him greatly, and that was, that Jesus should hear him and take pity on him. There might not be another opportunity ; He was going away out of Jericho. S. Matthew and S. Mark say : " He was leaving Jericho ; "

and He might never travel that way again. Jesus was "passing by," and might never pass again; it was his one chance, and he would not lose it. So he cared nothing at all for the rebukes of the multitude, but "cried so much the more."

And Jesus heard him. And "He stood still," stopped the course of those around Him, and would not go farther till he had listened to the beggar's prayer. He did more: He commanded him to be brought to Him. The bystanders were no doubt astonished; but some of them, kinder than the rest, addressed the beggar, saying: "Be of better comfort arise, He calleth thee."

Of better comfort, indeed! Jesus was calling for Bartimeus, sending for him, bidding him come! And S. Matthew describes the ecstasy of joy which filled his heart at the good news. "And casting off his garment he leaped up, and came to Him." The ragged cloak was his only defence against the storms and rain; but what did that matter? It might delay him a second, and he longed to be at once at the feet of Jesus. So he flung it away, and with one bound he knelt there in the dust before Him.

Jesus had heard the voice of Bartimeus calling on Him for mercy, and Bartimeus was now to hear the voice of Jesus. He spoke; and what did He say? Could any words be imagined more gracious, more courteous, than those which the Son of David addressed to the poor blind beggar?

"What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" As though He had said, "You have called, and I am here waiting to hear you. Tell me what you desire; whatever you will, I will do."[1]

But Bartimeus only had one desire. He knew exactly what he wanted, and he had never wanted it so much. He wanted his sight, and now, more than ever, he desired it,

[1] "He will do the will of them that fear Him" (Ps. cxliv. 19).

that he might behold Him to whose voice he was listening.

"Rabboni, that I may see."

And the answer came quickly: "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he saw.

S. Matthew adds that our Lord touched the eyes of the blind man; and all three Evangelists tell us that having received his sight, he glorified God, and followed Jesus on the way.

Here is the narrative, and a touching one it is. In few words it sets before us such a picture of the poor wayside beggar and his importunity; the contempt and want of feeling in the multitude, and the compassion of the loving Heart of Jesus. As to its application: Who can read it, and not feel that he is Bartimeus? Yes, I am the poor, despised, miserable, blind beggar. I do not know any one more miserable, more contemptible than myself. And I sit by the wayside leading to Jericho; the world and its throng passes by me, and cares for me nothing at all. What is the world to me, or I to the world? None of all that busy throng can give me the only one thing I care to have—my sight.

From time to time a passer-by casts some poor penny into my lap; but it is only dross, perishable, nothing worth to him who is blind, and desires only to see. I sit there, weary and sorrowful, listening to the sound of feet coming and going, but no one brings me comfort. At last, on a certain day, I hear a step that is not like other steps. I feel the approach of another presence, and my whole being is stirred within me. It is a moment of grace that has come, and may never come again; Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Oh! if I had not been blind, I should have seen Him pass before! And now He is going onward, and may never come again: what can I do? "I fear but one thing," says S. Augustine; "it is that Jesus is passing, and if I do not seize Him now, He may never pass again."

It is a moment of grace, and the only thing for us to do is to cry aloud in prayer for help and mercy. Everything around us would hinder and discourage us, and make us ashamed. But we have within us the courage which comes of a great want, and feeling our misery only makes us cry out the more.

What ! I ? A miserable wayside beggar ? Can there be hope that He will attend to me, will look on me, will help me ? No one in the world cares for me ; but that is only another reason why Jesus will be moved to compassion. What is compassion—*misericordia*—except to have " a heart for the miserable " ? And I am miserable ; so I cry with confidence.

You see, it was the confidence and the persistence of Bartimeus that gained the day. If he had listened to discouragement and " held his peace," he would not have been healed, " But he cried so much the more." There is a lesson for prayer, and for persistent prayer, and for prayer in the midst of our greatest miseries. Bartimeus did not wait till he could get better clothes, and look more respectable ; he was ready to go to Jesus in his rags and his dirt—if only Jesus would hear him !

And Jesus waited for him, " standing still." Remember this. You can stay the steps of Jesus, as Josue had power to stay the sun in its course. Prayer—real, earnest, crying, prayer—must be heard. It must reach the Heart of God ; He will stand still, and not pass farther ; and He will be ready " to do our will " (Ps. cii. 5 and cxliv. 19), to give us our heart's desire. " Ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

What I see in this, is the prompt, energetic seizing of the moment of grace. Jesus is always " drawing near." His footsteps may always be heard, if we do but listen. True, there will always be voices, other voices, bidding us hold our peace. Sloth, discouragement, the fear of what we may commit ourselves to, false shame, and a thousand other things, may try and stop our prayer. Then, all we have to do is to pray "so much the more," saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And observe: in this example, it is just prayer, and nothing else, that gains the victory. The victory was a miracle; yes; but prayer obtains miracles, if only it is humble, earnest and persevering. The prayer of Bartimeus had all these conditions, and he was heard And if we would be heard, we must learn in the school of the blind wayside beggar of Jericho, and Jesus, as He passes by, will hear our cry, and stand still, and grant us our heart's desire.

X. *THE WIDOW'S SON*

S. Luke vii. 11–16.

Our Lord was approaching the city of Naim, "and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude." As they came near to the gate of the city, they met a funeral procession: "A dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow."

We know nothing more of this young man or his mother. They are not named, nor do they reappear in the Gospel narrative. We are led, however, to think that they were persons of some consequence, for S. Luke says, "A great multitude of the city was with her." This was partly, no doubt, from the sympathy felt for her in her loss, but it seems likely that she filled a position which made her and her son well known. One feels also that this young man must have had qualities which rendered him very precious to his mother, and that she loved him, not merely as her only son, but as one worthy of her love. He was young: death had come to him just at the time when life is most full of charms. Rich, probably, and a favourite with his fellow-citizens, living in a happy home, the hope and pride of his mother, looking forward to all that the world could give him, and with a sunny future before him.

But all this is cut short. We can imagine the sudden sickness, the hopes turning into deadly fears, and then the last terrible certainty. It is all over, and nothing more is left to the poor mother than to carry the remains of her darling, and lay them by his father's side, and then to return home in her loneliness. She has what comfort the sympathy of her fellow-citizens can give her, and they accompany her in the sad procession.

But as they are coming out of the gate, they meet another company entering it. In the midst of that company is One, of Whom, perhaps, they had heard, for He had been preaching in the cities round about, and His fame was spread abroad. So both companies stood still, and all eyes were fixed on those two forms: the compassionate and loving Jesus, and the weeping mother.

" And when the Lord saw her, being moved with mercy towards her, He said to her, Weep not."

" The Lord "—an expression not often used by the Evangelists. How divine—how full of power and majesty He must have looked ! THE LORD—of life and of death ! He looked at her, and beheld her weeping, and knew all her history, and the history of her son. It was all open to His eyes, and He had compassion on her, and said, " Weep not."

Easy words to say, and, when said by human lips to human ears, they often enough sound a mockery. How could she do anything else than weep ? How could He tell her not to weep, who Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus ? But He told her not to weep because He was about to dry up the fountain of her tears, and His words are not mere human words. They effect the thing that they express, and if He bade her weep no more, the accents of His voice, as they reached her ears, carried consolation with them to her heart.

Then He drew near to the bier and touched it. And at once the bearers, overawed by His majestic presence, stood still. He beheld the form of the dead man, lying there with closed eyes, and wrapped in the garments of the grave. He felt compassion in His heart for him also and a deeper tenderness must have been in His voice as He pronounced the words: "Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak."

He had been dead at least a day and a night. He had closed his eyes and drawn his last breath in his mother's house, and probably her weeping countenance was the last thing on which his eyes had consciously rested. He opened them now, and they beheld—JESUS. His eyes once more beheld the light of the sun: he was at the gate of his own city, surrounded by familiar scenes and familiar faces; the bearers of the bier, who were probably his own servants and dependants—and above all, his mother, who was standing close beside him, in all the ecstasy of her unexpected joy.

But it was not on them or on her that he fixed his gaze; he beheld Jesus only. Those compassionate eyes were bent on him, and in his ears sounded the music of the voice, which had reached him even in death, and had loosed its icy bands. What was the world to him who had died and come to life again? What was it all to one who gazed at Jesus, and knew Him to be indeed the Lord of life and death?

There is probably no narrative in all the Gospels which so displays our Lord as sympathising with the sorrows of His creatures as this does. It was the aspect of the bereaved mother, and the piteous spectacle of her tears, which had first touched His heart, and moved Him to perform this miracle. And with the same movement of loving pity, after He had called the young man back to life, Jesus, it is said, "delivered him to his mother."

Perhaps He remembered the sorrow of His own mother in her three days' loss, and the joy of their meeting after His recovery. A mother's sorrow would be tenfold sacred to Him, and a mother's joy inexpressibly sweet. For He had, above the capacity of any other human heart, the gift of sympathy. He had felt for the widowed mother's anguish, and now He took part in the rapture of her joy. Mother and son were reunited, given back to one another, and she might possibly exclaim, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (S. Luke xv. 24).

There the Gospel narrative ends. But what must have followed after, we ask ourselves, following in thought each one of the actors in this marvellous drama. The young man himself, called back from the very grasp of death; did he return to his house and his lands, and resume life where, four-and-twenty hours before, he had laid it down? Could this world, and home, and mother's love, and domestic ties, and the fair promise of life and riches, and a prosperous future, seem to him what it did before? Could it smile on him as then it smiled, or must there not rather have been a mighty change?

And the mother? Is it possible that she could have taken leave of Jesus, and gone back to her home, and thought of Him no more? Surely she prayed Him to come with them and be their guest, and to lodge at no other house in Naim. And He would certainly not have refused. He must have loved that young man, for deep compassion is the sure road to love.

And lastly, "He had delivered him to his mother." Do we need to be told that, in her gratitude, she gave him back to Jesus. His old life had belonged to her, but his new life could only belong to Him who had given it to him. For the world and its pomps must utterly have vanished away out of his sight. He saw no man but Jesus only, and to Jesus only from that time could he have belonged.

III. LESSONS AND INCIDENTS FROM OUR LORD'S LIFE

XI. *JUDGE NOT*

S. Matt. vii. 1; S. Luke vi. 37.

If there is any precept specially enforced in the Gospels, it is that which forbids us to judge each other. Not merely is rash judgment forbidden, but judgment of all kinds, unless exercised as a duty. For there are some, of course, who, in virtue of their office and calling, are required to pass judgment. If we are not in their case, we are commanded not to judge *at all*.

Now there is nothing which by nature we are more prompt to do. In youth, especially, before we learn by experience the difficulty of forming a just judgment, we are ready to pronounce on everything, and everybody, and every act around us. As we grow older, the habit grows weaker. We have more experience, and so, perhaps, it might be thought we were better qualified to judge. But, on the other hand, experience has now taught us how difficult it is to form true and righteous judgments, and so we are afraid.

To judge the conduct of another person, we want, in the first place, to know the whole case in all its bearings. That is, not only the exterior act, but the interior motive; what led to it, what circumstances may either extenuate or aggravate it. And in the exterior act itself, was it exactly as it seemed to be, as it was reported to us? Was there not, perhaps, some little matter left out or added which makes all the difference? And you who judge, have you searched into all this, and sifted the evidence? And can you read the secret of the heart, so as to be able to say if the act was premeditated and malicious, or hasty and all but involuntary? And do you know if the one whom you judge has not washed away his fault with bitter tears, shed in secret ?

Our divine Lord knew all these things of those around Him. He knew them before, and after : the exterior in all its details, the interior in its most hidden folds. Therefore, He could judge : and judgment is peculiarly His office. " All judgment is given to the Son " (S. John v. 22).

We then, when we take on ourselves this office, do practically take on us the office of Jesus Christ. We set ourselves above everything and every person on which we pass judgment. In nine cases out of ten, we judge, not from real evidence, but according to some interior standard of our own, which constitutes what we call *prejudice. i.e.*, pre-judgment. We like or we dislike ; we mistrust, we suspect. We have impressions, aversions, and what we call intuitions. And these take the place of evidence, and bear false witness.

Then comes in imagination, which paints its false pictures, and we believe them true. Wounded self-love in some cases has also its word to say, and then all hope of truth and justice is at an end. The remedy is in most cases, not so much in taking steps to rectify our judgment, as in not judging at all.

There is another element in unfavourable judgments which makes them particularly odious. Everything, certainly every person has many aspects. Every object has one side in light, and one in shadow. Every soul has its good and its imperfect qualities. Criticism, which precedes judgment, is wont to lay hold of what is imperfect, and dwell on that in preference to what is good. The critic of a book busies himself in pointing out defects and omissions rather than excellences. The really charitable soul and the really just judge will make due allowance for unavoidable defects and limitations of character, and will by preference examine what there is to love in a soul, rather than what there is to blame. But to go the other way, and look out for defects, is the part of malignity, and there is a great deal of malignity in all unfavourable judgments.

XII. *THE STORM ON THE LAKE*

S. MATT. viii. 23–27.

IN the life of our divine Lord there were many phases and many contrasts. As it had its persecutions and sufferings, so also it had its scenes of popularity and applause. Specially at the beginning of His public ministry, after the Sermon on the Mount had spread the fame of His doctrine through Galilee, we find Him surrounded by multitudes desirous of hearing Him, bringing Him their sick to heal, and offering themselves to be His disciples. At these times He was wont to retire from their importunities and "rest awhile" with His disciples, sometimes on a mountain, sometimes in a desert place, and sometimes taking refuge in Peter's boat, and crossing to the other side of the lake.

Thus, after He had come down from the Mount, where He had delivered His sermon, we find Him at once surrounded by "great multitudes" (S. Matt. viii. 1). First a leper comes, and He heals him; then the centurion; then He enters Peter's house, and cures his mother-in-law of a fever; then, when the evening has come, they bring Him a number of persons possessed by devils, "and all that were sick He healed," until, "seeing great multitudes about Him, He gave orders to pass over the water." But even on His way to the water-side He is beset with petitions; a certain scribe wishes to follow Him; and another also desires to be His disciple. No wonder that He who did not shrink from bearing the infirmities of human nature should suffer fatigue and exhaustion. And so, having entered into the ship, He lay down to rest, and S. Mark adds, "in the hinder part of the ship, He was asleep upon a pillow." S. John Chrysostom observes that His pillow was a log of wood, which appears likely enough—a pillow of down would scarcely be found on board a rough fishing-boat.

Contemplate Him thus sleeping, and manifesting the truth of His human nature, and recall the words of the spouse in the Canticle: "I sleep, but my heart watcheth." And as He slept a tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with the waves. S. Luke in his description uses an expressive word which is singularly accurate, and will be recognised as such by any one used to a sea-shore locked in by hills. He says, "There came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled and were in danger." It is exactly how a sudden squall comes down through the gullies of the hills on to the water. "And they came and awaked Him, saying, Master, we perish. But He, arising, rebuked the wind, and the rage of the water; and it ceased, and there came a great calm" (S Luke viii. 24). And He said to them, "Why are you fearful O ye of little faith?"

Observe, He did not rebuke them as having no faith. If they had had none, they would not have come to Him and asked him to save them. They had faith, but it was poor and small, or they would have known that with Him in the boat, they could not perish.

And this for the most part is our own case. It is not that we are infidels, that we do not believe in God's power and will to deliver us: in the abstract we believe it well enough But the pressure of present trials drives it out of our souls; we cannot trust ourselves to Him wholly, blindly, without reserve. Above all, our poor sensitive nature trembles and desponds, when He seems to be asleep. For there are times when to our sense and comprehension He does not seem to hear our prayer. Appeal to our abstract faith, and we should reply that God never abandons us, never turns a deaf ear to those who cry to Him. But question our sensitive nature, and it will cry out that God has cast us off, left us to ourselves, will have nothing more to do with us, though we know well enough that to feel and speak so is to charge Him foolishly. Here, then, is the lesson of what is required of us by perfect faith—to trust Him when appearances are against Him. Why, after all, it is only what we are bound to render to human friendship. What is that friendship worth which will not trust in spite of a seeming cloud ? We give our confidence through evil report and good report, to one whom we truly love. But to Almighty God we deal out a different measure ! An intolerable indignity to offer Him—to give Him less confidence than we give to creatures. But so it is ; and here is the history of many a sore interior trial, which the soul would be able to bear bravely enough, did she believe with a blind and trustful confidence that God can never betray or forsake us

After the storm there was a great calm. Yes ; trials come, and they pass. And when they pass, we see and realise all they have done for us. When our time of doubt and dismay is over, and we once more feel Jesus is with us, and once more hear His voice within our hearts, there is a greal calm. How strange that we are so backward to use our experience of His power to restore peace, and His unchanging and strong compassion ! Surely the next time that the winds and waves of trial and temptation arise, we shall be wiser, and know better how to bear them, and fear nothing so long as we know Him to be with us, even if He does not seem to heed us or answer to our cry.

" He rebuked the wind and the waves." What does this mean ? The winds and the waves are not intelligent beings ; how then could they obey him ? It seems to suggest that all the changes of the natural, inanimate world are in reality wrought through the agency of the angels, as many of the Fathers have supposed. " Thou makest

Thy angels spirits: and Thy ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. ciii. 4). The Psalms are full of passages which seem to point to this, and would lead us to see in every natural phenomenon the hidden agency of the spiritual world. This lends a deeper character to these phenomena, and makes us regard them with a kind of awful reverence. Natural beauty is not, then, an entirely material thing, and the changes of seasons, the revolution of the stars, the budding and the opening of spring and summer are divine things, wrought out by "the ministry of angels."

And our divine Lord in His human nature, He whom the Apostles awoke from His sleep to come to their aid, He, the Creator, is also the Lord and Master of nature. All things were made by Him, the Eternal Word, and all things obey Him, the Word made flesh. In these words we have the answer to the question which the people asked, wondering; "What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?"

XIII. *THE RICH YOUNG MAN*

S. MATT. xix. 16; S. MARK x. 17.

ON a certain day, as our Lord was journeying with His disciples in the territory beyond the Jordan, a young man came running up, and kneeling before Him, put this question to Him: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?" The same question had been put before by one of the scribes, tempting Him. But he who now spoke was evidently quite in earnest. He came with a sort of ardour, not to tempt our Lord, but for his own soul's sake.

His fault, whatever it was, was not want of sincerity. Our Lord answered much as He had answered the scribe, by reminding him of the commandments. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." And he answered (and it would seem truly), "Master, all these

I have observed from my youth. What is yet wanting unto me ? " We gather that he was really justified in saying this, and that it was no empty boast, from what follows in S. Mark's version of the story. " And Jesus looking on him, loved him." Like all S. Mark's words, there is in these a depth and power of description which places the scene before us. Before going farther, contemplate it as though you were present and looking on. The young man, in the beauty of his ingenuous youth, bearing on his countenance the stamp of a guileless, innocent life, kneeling at our Lord's feet, whither he has come " running " ; kneeling there with only one desire in his heart, " everlasting life." Our Lord " looking on him," beholding him with pleasure, desiring to call him on to yet higher perfection ; " loving him " with a love of preference, and, as we may well believe, manifesting that love by His gracious looks—who would not desire to be so looked on, and so loved ? Now listen to the words He speaks : " If thou wilt be perfect " (or as S. Mark says, " One thing is yet wanting to thee "), " go sell all, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come, follow Me."

What should we have expected ? Surely that he, thus loved and spoken to, thus invited by our Lord, would have responded with joy. Surely he will not be less quick in answering to His call than Matthew and Zaccheus, the publicans, were ; he whose whole life had been so innocent and blameless, and unstained by any kind of sin. But no ; the invitation that should have filled him with joy, struck him to the heart with sadness. " He was struck sad at that saying, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." We watch him rise from his knees, with his head hanging down ; hesitate, perhaps, for a moment (there must surely have been a moment of struggle) ; Jesus still watching him, and waiting for his reply. And then—the world wins its triumph, and he goes away, sorrowfully, it is true, but still he goes away, "for he had great possessions," and he could not give them up, even to be numbered among the followers of Jesus.

What was the end of that young man? We are not told. I have often tried to hope the best for him, and to think that, though he was sorrowful at having to part with his possessions, yet he did part with them, and that though he went away he came back later. But though we are not expressly told he did not, yet the context does not read hopefully. "Jesus, looking round about," that is, on His disciples, who stood watching the scene, said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." We do not necessarily read this as a final condemnation of the poor youth, but yet there it is: of all obstacles to perfection, there is nothing so hard and strong as the world and its riches. O poor youth! If indeed he then made his choice, and abode by it, what a choice it was! To place Jesus and riches side by side—and deliberately to put away the One, and choose the other! How could this come about, and above all, how could it be with one who had kept the commandments from his youth up, and who knew that Jesus loved him?

First, we may suppose there was something wanting in his knowledge of his own heart. That he had a love for what was good is not to be doubted. But he trusted too much to this, and to his external rectitude of life, and imagined it would carry him further than he really had strength for. Possibly he had no very strong passions or temptations. Life had so far been pleasant and easy to him, and, as is sometimes the case with good people, he had grown up altogether ignorant of the real weakness of his own heart. It is so difficult to think that any soul could have been lost whom Jesus loved, that I try to believe this great, great revelation to him of the secret worldliness which was hidden away in his heart, may have been a humiliation which first let in the daylight, and was the beginning of better things. For it is quite possible that, living a pure, blameless, righteous life, he may have got altogether blind to his own real interior dispositions, and fancied himself on the road to perfection; so that he really needed this fall, this tearing away of the veil, to know himself for what he was, and to fling away his confidence in himself.

Then, secondly, he had thought about perfection, and had desired it, in a way, but he did not know what it really implied. He had never dreamt of sacrifice, of detachment, least of all of poverty; the stripping himself of all that had made life seem so sunny and so pleasant. Now here I think the story meets us face to face. We enter into ourselves often enough; we make resolutions; we offer ourselves to God without reserve; kneeling before the tabernacle, we are conscious of powerful impulses and warm ardent desires. Then a sacrifice meets us and looks us in the face—a sacrifice of our pride, or our likings, or our self-love. There is the test: do we embrace it, or do we, like the young man, "go away sorrowful, struck sad at the heart,' because we cannot make it?

This contest between our aspirations and our fulfilments—our promises and their accomplishment—our prayers and our fidelity, is ever going on. And Jesus Christ stands by all the while, not forcing or compelling our reluctant wills, but looking on us, and loving us, and whispering, "Wilt thou be perfect? Then sell all—and come, follow Me." And we stand, and hesitate, and are sorrowful, and call our little miseries, to which we cling, "great possessions." I suppose no one could ever read the story of this young man, without wondering how he could have gone away, and turned his back on Jesus. But for my part, I fear to think how many times I may have done the same.

Well, but let us take another view of the story. Can we think that our Lord was indifferent to what had passed? He had looked on that young man, and loved him. He desired to have him for a disciple, and to call him to perfection. Did his heart feel no disappointment, as He watched him going away? Was He not also "sorrowful," struck sad at the loss, the ingratitude of a heart that might have been so dear to Him? All that and more is implied in the narrative.

And we who are standing by, watching it all, how are we moved? Is it nothing to us that that divine Heart should be wounded in Its tender love for a soul? Can we be indifferent that He is disappointed? Who can behold it all, and not desire to fling himself at the feet of Jesus and say: "Lord, take me, look on me, love me. I have not kept the commandments from my youth; I am not worthy to be looked on with an eye of love; I deserve nothing; I cannot lift my eyes to such a thing as perfection. But yet I do desire life ever lasting. And I desire something at this moment even more than the joys of eternal life, if that can be—I desire to comfort Thy Heart, and to make up to Thee by my fidelity for the coldness of that soul that could turn its back on Thee, and go back to the world! Take me in his place, and let me grow perfect by the practice of a great and boundless love!"

XIV. *THE CRUMBS FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE*

S. Mark vii. 24.

During the course of His public ministry our Lord travelled beyond the confines of Palestine, properly so called, and came into the territory of Tyre and Sidon. The population of those parts was mixed, having doubtless some belonging to Jewish race, but others who were Gentiles. The woman who met Him and implored Him to cure her daughter, who was vexed by a devil, was evidently not an Israelite. She is called " a woman of Canaan," whatever that may mean, belonging to some Gentile race of the country which forms the border of Palestine. That she knew our Lord by repute is also evident, not only as a worker of miracles, but as the Son of David, and probably therefore she had faith in Him as the promised Messiah of the Jews. How far her faith extended we do not know, except that she believed firmly and without doubting that He had the power to grant her petition, if only He had the will. And to move His will, she knew no other means than earnest prayer. " She came to Him crying out ; " words which express the anguish of her heart, the energy of her desire, and her passionate resolution not to desist till her prayer had been granted

But she received nothing to encourage her. He, so kind, so ready, so gracious in His ordinary dealings with those who sought His aid, on this occasion gave her no response. " He answered her not a word." Not a word ! What a forlorn silence must that have been ! Not a word ! But it did not rebuff her, for, as we understand from the complaint of the disciples, she continued to follow them, renewing her entreaties and her cries for mercy. " Lord," they said, " send her away, for she crieth after us." But even the pleading of His disciples did not move Him : " I am not sent," He replied, " but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here was, if possible, a more decided rejection of her cause. He had been only silent at first ; now, in answer to the appeal of His disciples, He gives a positive refusal. But there was something in the heart of this poor woman which would not take refusal. " She came and worshipped Him ; " that is, she came and knelt at His feet as a suppliant, and a loving, trustful suppliant, who would not be denied, and would not give up her confidence in the goodness of Him who seemed to reject her. " Lord, help me ! " Even this did not move Him. It only won from Him the memorable reply, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs."

"The dogs!" That, then, was the light in which He regarded her; outcast, unclean! Put yourself in her place, and think how you would have felt, and what self-love would have had to endure at such a judgment from Him. Realise that you hear yourself ranked among the dogs by Him whose lightest word will be of more worth and weight to you than the praise of the whole universe. But is it not just, is it not true? Am I not a dog, a brute, and worse too, by my infidelities? Nay, can I say that I deserve any name half so good? For a dog has his merits; he knows his master, and follows him. He is faithful, brave, serviceable and obedient. Well, if I am a dog by my misery and worthlessness, I will try to be deserving of the name by my trustful love. A dog will bear to be beaten and ill-treated, and not lose any affection for his master on that account. And so I will try in reality to be faithful, loving, humble, and obedient as a dog.

How could He reject such dispositions as these? He did not reject them: they conquered Him, compelled Him to yield, and drew from Him those words of commendation, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt."

And what had she asked for? With what was she content? Crumbs only. I find something truly consoling in the thought, that the things we prize so greatly here below, are after all only crumbs. They tell us nothing of what He has in store, to give us in the end. As all our sufferings do but make up "a light affliction," so all our gifts and graces (and this was a miraculous cure) are only "crumbs." The magnificence of God, and what He has in His power to give us, is so utterly beyond our comprehension, that its greatest manifestations here are nothing but crumbs. So, too, the perfections which we behold here below, in the souls of the faithful, convey no idea of the height of sanctity to which He can and will elevate His chosen ones, if only they put no obstacle in the way. It is as though we contemplated some little hills and undulations, and thought them to form a picture of the majestic Andes.

One other thought suggests itself. This poor woman came seeking crumbs, and she received contempt, hard words, humiliation. Unconsciously she was being given by our divine Lord a test of faith, which was to be the means of bestowing on her an immortal name of glory. So, then, when such things befall us, we may gather them up into our store, as truly "crumbs from the Master's table." He fed on them Himself, and He will not fail to dispense them to His chosen ones. It will help us in bearing an hour of desolation, or a sharp pang of disappointment, if as we reverently gather it up, we are able to say: "This too is a crumb from my Master's table."

XV. "*DUC IN ALTUM*"[1]

> "And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now, when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon. Launch out into the deep, and let down your net for a draught."—S. Luke v. 3, 4.

Our divine Lord taught the people in various ways and places. Sometimes He entered into the synagogues and taught them there. Sometimes He spoke to them on the mountain-top, and sometimes on the plain. On the occasion of which S. Luke speaks, the multitudes pressed on Him, as He stood on the sea-shore of the Lake of Genesareth, and entering into a little fishing-boat

[1] "Launch out into the deep."

which was S. Peter's and which was at the water's edge, He desired Peter to thrust it out a little from the land; "and sitting, He taught the multitudes from the ship."

Place the whole scene before your eyes; the vast multitude thronging the sea-shore, and pressing on Him to hear the word of God; all around so natural and ordinary—the sea, and its little fishing-boats drawn up for the convenience of the fishermen, who had gone out of them, and were busy washing and mending their nets. One has seen such a spectacle times out of mind. The boats were rude and humble enough to the eye—common fishing-boats; only, one of them was the "bark of Peter." In external appearance it had nothing to distinguish it from the others; and yet it was to be the symbol of the Catholic Church; and into it the Divine Teacher chose to enter, and setting there His throne, His chair of government and of doctrine, He, out of it, taught the multitudes.

His disciples, no doubt, were with Him in the ship; at His command they thrust out a little from the land. But it could only have been a "little way," because our Lord was able to speak to the people, and they to hear Him, without any difficulty. Those in the ship and those on shore could speak to one another with ease; and the few feet of water between them could hardly be called a separation.

But after a while our Lord gave another command, and it was this: *Duc in Altum*—"Launch out into the deep;" and they obeyed. Then they left the shore; and the forms of those standing there grew faint and distant. They set their course for the open sea and for its deepest waters; and soon they had fairly parted with the shore, and were alone on the deep with Jesus.

Up to a certain moment of our lives, we were standing with the multitude on the sea-shore; one of the crowd, or perhaps, like Simon Peter, following our ordinary track of daily life—"washing our nets." All things went on naturally, easily, and quietly. The presence of the supernatural did not make itself felt. We had lived so many years in the same way; that sea-shore was so familiar to us, with all its sights and sounds and occupations. Family and brethren and friends were all around us, each one busy in his own manner, to-day bringing the same duties as yesterday had brought and as to-morrow was likely to bring.

Then One passed by and called us, and all was changed. He bade us enter with Him into the ship of Peter, and "thrust out a little from the land," and we obeyed. It seemed but a little separation—hardly a separation at all. We scarcely knew what we had done, or why we had done it, or in what way it was different from what we had done many times before.

It was not the first time that Peter had entered into his boat and thrust out from the shore; the difference was that this time our Lord was with him, sitting here, as the Master and the Pilot of the ship. And so, perhaps, it was that at one time, almost without our knowing it, our Lord came to us, and took us with Him into the ship—took possession of us, and won from us a closer allegiance, became our Master, and delivered us from being our own masters; and at once a separation was made between us and our former selves, so slight at first, we did not see what it meant or what it would lead to. But that barrier, once raised, could never be crossed again; and the world from which we were parted, as it were, but by a stone's throw, was, in reality, cut away from us for ever.

A longer or shorter time passed, and then came another command: *Duc in altum*—"Launch out into the deep;" and we obeyed. We turned our back on the shore, with all who stood there. We did not hesitate and stop to bid them farewell, but we set the sail, and steered as He commanded, and soon we had lost sight of all things we had left behind, and were alone on the mighty deep with Jesus.

This, it seems to me, is just the venture of faith which every soul must make, if it would pass out of the mere natural into the supernatural life. There always is a time, even after we have sincerely given ourselves to God, when, if I may use the expression, we continue to "hug the shore." We have only "thrust out a little from the land;" we are still in connection and in sympathy with the old world and the old life. We have not the courage to let the severance between us and it be complete and uncompromising. So it goes on for a while; and, as long as this lasts, the work is only half done. Jesus is indeed with us in the boat, but our eyes, our thoughts, our hearts, are often enough turned to the old familiar shore and those who stand there. And He is patient, and bears with our imperfect surrender of ourselves for a time. He waits the right moment, when He can require more of us. And when it comes, He utters the word of command: "*Duc in altum.* Launch out into the deep, and leave all of nature behind you. Trust yourselves alone with Me; for I am with you in the boat, and I will be your pilot. Leave all, and you shall find all. You have laboured hitherto all night, and have taken nothing; but now, 'let down your nets for a draught.' For if you give all, it shall be given to you in good measure. If you leave and forsake all, you will find the more."

And His word is abundantly fulfilled. The disciples found it so, when, at His word, they let down their nets, and at once enclosed a very great multitude of fishes. And we shall find it so likewise. Oh! how weary and unsatisfactory life has been, so long as we kept half-measures with God! Belonging to Him, and yet unwilling to give Him all; owning Him as our Master, yet full of longing after what we had left behind us on the shore. No wonder, if, when we toiled in that halfhearted fashion, we laboured all night and took nothing! Our life all that time was just nothingness; it was empty, weary, and unprofitable. Now, in the strength, of Jesus and in the spirit of self-sacrifice, we labour, and the case is quite different. Our nets are full indeed, so that we are "wholly astonished" to see what God will do for a soul that has the courage to trust itself to Him.

O Lord, give us the grace to make that sacrifice; to separate in heart and affection from everything which is not Thyself; and, turning our backs resolutely on all creatures, to launch out into the deep, not knowing whither we are going, but knowing that Thou art with us, and that Thou art the Master and Pilot of our souls!

XVI. *MARTHA AND MARY*

"Mary hath chosen the best part."—S. LUKE x. 42.

THIS passage, as we all know, is commonly interpreted as signifying the two lives, the active and the contemplative, of which the latter, figured by Mary, is preferred to the active, represented by Martha. Not that the active life is condemned; our Lord loved Martha as well as Mary; but He gently blamed her over-solicitude and trouble of mind, and declared Mary to have "chosen the best part."

Our own form of religious life aims at a union of both these lives; and this mixed life, when attained, is declared by all authorities to be the most perfect of all, as most resembling that of Christ and His Apostles. I say, "when attained," and here is the point for our study and attention.

Suppose any one should ask us how we considered our life to be "the mixed life," it is conceivable that one might reply thus: "Because it embraces two classes of duties—the active, in our works of charity, such as teaching, visiting the sick and poor, and other occupations for the bodies or souls of our neighbour; and the contemplative, inasmuch as a good deal of our time is assigned to Choir duties, the recitation of the Divine Office, Adoration, Meditation, and the like."

This would be quite true; and yet the reply would be a most inadequate one. For we might be leading such a life, and yet hardly be able to say it was truly the "mixed life," described by theologians as the most perfect. Observe: there is a vast difference between linking two things together and mixing them. You may link a gold chain to an iron one, but they each remain gold and iron. Cast them into a furnace and melt them together, and you have a mixed metal, made up of both. And so, I apprehend, you might be giving five hours to the work of teaching, and another five to prayer, reading, and the office, without really attaining the perfection of the mixed life. For this, it is necessary, as our Constitutions say, that our active work should flow from the abundance of contemplation.

What do you really mean by contemplation? Is it not union with God? Well then, our active work must in some way or other be an exercise of this union, or flow from it, or be coloured and directed by it. Take an example. We have an external duty to perform: to wash a cup or mend a habit. In themselves, these are not spiritual acts; and, to make them so, two things are necessary—a supernatural motive and a supernatural manner of performing them. First, a supernatural motive. Here, of course, religious obedience is a most powerful aid; it almost necessarily supplies the motive. We do the duty because we are appointed by obedience to do it, not at our own choice. But there are degrees in this; a contemplative spirit will see, that inasmuch as we are sent by obedience, we are sent by the voice of Christ. It is as though He said: "I call and require you to do this for Me, at this time, in this manner, and to do it as well as you can." And if once the habit can be acquired of realising this most simple truth, it is impossible that we should not do the work both well, according to our powers, and with recollection and devotion; that is, it will be a work flowing from the abundance of contemplation.

We must remember that there will always be some more attracted to the active and some to the contemplative duties of our state. If we do not unite them, one of two dangers will ensue: those who prefer the contemplative duties will depreciate and look down on active employments, either as being of less value or as being "distractions"; and in consequence, they will very likely, on principle, not put their hearts into their duties, not give their minds to them, and so do them badly. The habit will be badly mended, the cup badly washed, possibly broken. But once realise that it is done for God, at His command, to please Him, and it becomes a work of love, and is well and perfectly done.

On the other hand, those who love active duties have to guard against these same duties absorbing the mind and dissipating them. Teaching may be made a work of contemplation, but it may also be a distracting exercise of natural powers. Household work may be a bustle; visiting the sick and poor, a vent for natural curiosity and restlessness. We have, therefore, in prayer and meditation to acquire the habits of mind which will supply both the supernatural motive and the supernatural manner of performing these acts; for they do not come by nature.

Thus both the active and the contemplative have each their work to do to blend the two lives into one; the one by doing her work well, and making use of her contemplative spirit to enable her to do so; the other by raising her active works to a higher level, and using them to help her to acquire a more interior spirit. And one thing in the words of the Gospel is very noteworthy. The thing reproved in Martha, and which, therefore, separated her the most from the spirit of Mary, was "carefulness" and "trouble." To acquire the contemplative way of discharging active works of any kind, we must avoid trouble and anxiety over them; we must keep the peace of our soul. And this is precisely what recollection and the prayer of recollection does for us. Beyond a doubt, the prayer best suited for those engaged in active duties is the prayer of recollection. "But it is just what active work banishes," it may be objected. If so, it is a test and proof that the active work is being done, neither from a supernatural motive, nor in a supernatural manner. If it were, the soul would be at peace in our Lord's presence, neither careful nor troubled —at the same time, neither distracted nor absent-minded. How can a recollected soul be absent-minded? There is no surer proof that a soul is not recollected, than if the mind is absent from the work in hand. Presence of mind is a sign of recollection. S. Ambrose says of Our Blessed Lady that she was *intenta operi;* intent on the work before her. Surely, in her, work flowed from the abundance of contemplation.

Observe, also, the distinction between Martha's "many things," and Mary's "one thing necessary." The first are our *opera*, "works,"[1] which we pray about in the *Pretiosa*, and in the other is the *opus*, "work." The first are occupations, labours, employments; but the other is our WORK. "Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labours until the evening" (Ps. ciii. 23). The "labours" are of tongue and hand; but the "work" is of the heart, directed God-ward. The labours are perishable, but the work endureth for ever.

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[1] The reference is to the passage, "Let the brightness of our Lord God be upon us; and direct Thou the works of our hands over us; yea, the work of our hands do Thou direct.' (Ps. lxxxix. 17).

XVII. *ZACCHEUS*

S. LUKE xix. 1-10.

STRANGE as it may seem, Jericho, which had no good repute in the days of our Lord, was the scene of some of His most touching deeds of mercy. We have seen how it fared with the blind beggar who received his sight, and now we come on another history, in which the work of healing is wrought, not on the body but on the soul. And the subject of this act of mercy is not a beggar, but the chief of the publicans, of whom all that the Gospel tells us is that "he was rich."

It would seem that it was on the same day that He had healed a blind man, whom He met on His way, that Jesus, passing on to Jericho, entered the city, and, as S. Luke says, "walked through" it. Jericho was the image of the world; and the followers of Jesus Christ, though they live in it, do not make it their home. They do but pass through it, having here no abiding city. That our Lord should have found a disciple in the chief of the publicans, noted only for his wealth, is surprising enough. He seems to have been attracted first by curiosity, "he sought to see Jesus, who He was;" but the immense crowd that surrounded Him hid Him from sight, for Zaccheus was "low of stature."

Little as we are told about him, there is a certain stamp of individuality about that little. He was evidently a resolute man, prompt and determined, and free both from indifference and human respect. What he had set his mind on doing, he would do, no matter what people might say; and so he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree by the wayside, that he might behold our Lord as He passed. Ancient writers see a profound and mystical sense in this fact, and explain how the sycamore tree is an image of the Cross of Christ, meditation on which raises us, little as we are, to the heights of contemplation. But, apart from this mystical interpretation, there is matter for meditation in the simple literal facts; Zaccheus, the rich man, the chief of the publicans, so eager and determined to see Jesus, that to do so, he flings all human respect on one side, does not heed the gibes or ridicule of the crowd—anything, so long as he can get where he can see Jesus.

We do not know how much there was in this of mere natural curiosity, and how much of the germ of divine faith. Anyhow, we can imagine, when he did see Him, the sight of that majestic form, beautiful among the sons of men, must have spoken to his heart. He had seen no form, no countenance like that, among the publicans of Jericho. He watches Him drawing nearer and nearer, until when He has come close under the sycamore tree, those divine eyes are raised, and that voice which spake as never man spake, calls him by his name. "And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him, and said to him: Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house."

"Zaccheus!" So He knew him. Who does not know what it is to be called by name? So did our Lord speak to Mary in the garden—so also to S. Peter: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?"

"Make haste, and come down." It was a touch which showed how well He knew him. Zaccheus was just the one who would be sure to "make haste." As he had run before to climb into the tree, so he would show the same promptness and readiness in coming down at our Lord's bidding. Was it not his earnest desire to behold Jesus, which made our Lord look up to him, and bid him receive Him into his house? No wonder that "he made haste, and came down, and received Him with joy!"

But the crowd who beheld what had happened, murmured, "saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner!" Was there no one else in all Jericho whom He could have chosen except this chief of the publicans?

Zaccheus heard the murmur, but he did not vindicate himself. He did not complain of being called a sinner; but, with the same quick, ardent, unhesitating spirit he had shown before, he responded to the touch of divine grace which the look and the company of Jesus brought with them. "A sinner"—yes, he was stained with the guilt of covetousness and injustice—but he would be so no longer. If he held any of his wealth unlawfully, it should be renounced that moment. So he stood forth before them all and said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and, if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold." He did not say, "I will give; I will restore;" but—"I do it now, this moment, on the spot." This is indeed prompt correspondence with grace, and that not in word or even in resolution, but in act.

No wonder then that our Lord's answer was gracious and consoling. "This day is salvation come to this house—for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Happy Zaccheus, to hear such words, and from such lips! Salvation had come to his house, which had received within it as a guest the Saviour of the world. No wonder that the heart of Zaccheus was full of joy. The Son of Man had come to seek him and to save him, and brought salvation within his doors.

What would not we give to hear such words spoken to ourselves? Well! if it be so, here is the example of Zaccheus, very plain to imitate, prompt, unhesitating, and uncompromising. What Jesus demands of him, he gives. What Jesus inspires, he performs. No matter what the world says; he cares as little for its murmurs as for its ridicule. He cares only for one thing, to receive Jesus into his house and to do His bidding. "This day is salvation come" to his house; and cost what it may, however great may be the sacrifice, from this day he will own no other Master than Jesus

Now this is just the character that is capable of the gift of joy. The soul that acts, and acts promptly, will act joyfully. Not all souls receive Jesus "with joy." There are those who allow themselves to be weighed down by fear or mistrust, who brood instead of acting; and, instead of climbing into the sycamore to behold Jesus, go down into a dark cavern to behold themselves. Such souls groan over and bewail their shortness of stature, and make themselves miserable about it as a hopeless case. Zaccheus should teach them a lesson; if he owned himself unable to see in the crowd, he was not too weak to climb. And if the presence of our Lord and the murmurs of the multitude brought home to his heart his years of unjust living, he was not going to despond. Then and there, as the light came, he received it joyfully and obeyed it. If his sin of injustice had been great, his acts of reparation should be greater. He would not be content with restoring his ill-gotten gains; he would restore them fourfold. That one word declares the generosity of his nature; it was the "good measure pressed down and running over" (S. Luke vi. 38), with which he desired to make reparation. And with the same measure that he meted, it was measured to him again; and he had the blessed assurance from the lips of Jesus Himself, that that day of generous repentance was to be to him and to all his house a day of salvation.

XVIII. *THE SACRED HUMANITY*

"And seeing the city, He wept over it."—ST. LUKE xix. 41.

THE sacred Manhood of the Son of God is given to us to be the object of our heart's love. We are not merely to worship and extol it; we must give it our entire devotion, and love it as we love no creature, however dear or holy. But, to be able to love it, we must know it; and to know it, we must study and contemplate it, setting it before the eye of our soul, till we get familiar with every feature.

A perfect Manhood: what does this imply? Perfection of every power and faculty, whether of heart or understanding; perfect wisdom, intellect, imagination, perception; perfect justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance; generosity too, and sweetness, patience, courage, long-suffering, and power of sympathy; with a thousand other qualities which belong to perfection, and indicate its presence.

All these we know must have been there; but, in order to contemplate and become familiar with them, it helps us greatly to seek for the manifestation of each in the sacred Gospels. It is one thing to think of patience or wisdom in the abstract, and quite another to consider them as they appear in the individual soul and character.

For our Divine Lord had His own individual character. Character is made up of the assemblage of various qualities, and the relation which each one holds, and the influence it exercises on another. So in human characters we see the variety caused by the preponderance of one quality over another, the preponderance of intellect over will, of the imagination over the reason, of the affections over the understanding, and so on. In our Divine Lord all these elements were to be found in perfect proportion. Hence the beauty of His human soul; for proportion is one chief element, whether of moral or physical beauty.

He was the uncreated Wisdom. He displayed His wisdom by the wonderful way in which He adapted His teaching to all minds, whether they were learned scribes and doctors or the rude multitudes, men or women, Jews, Gentiles, or Samaritans. To Nicodemus He spoke as to a "Master in Israel"; to the Samaritan woman as one who read her heart. This universality of His power of reaching all minds was one of the most marvellous proofs of the immense compass of his own.

Had He imagination, a sense of beauty, a power of illustration? We have only to read His discourses and parables to give an answer. The parable of the prodigal son speaks for itself. For the rest, see the richness and abundance of His illustrations, gathered from everything around Him—the birds in the air, the lilies in the field, the corn, the sheep, the fishing-boats, every natural object furnishes its lesson.

Had He human affections, that love of preference which gives a capacity for friendship? Yes—under perfect regulation He had His human friends, S. John, Lazarus, the sisters of Bethany—He loved them as He did not love others. He loved His race and country too with a natural tenderness. He wept over Jerusalem as we may believe one would weep who loved the city of his own people. He loved little children and even caressed them. The purity and blamelessness of that young man in the Gospels had power over His Heart and " looking on him, He loved him " (S. Mark x. 21).

Then so often we read of Him that " He had compassion." His character was as far as possible removed from the coldness of a nature which merely had no passions. What we call " passionless characters " are often enough unsympathetic and hard in judging. They are not often tender and long-suffering. They know nothing of some of the temptations incident to men, and so they cannot feel for those under temptation. But He who was removed by an unspeakable distance from all contagion of sin was yet " the friend of sinners." Was this exquisite serenity then never disturbed? Was it incapable of anger? Not quite so. Zeal for His Father's glory moved Him when He drove the profane intruders out of the Temple. And, besides this, there was one thing which drew from Him language terrible in its severity. That one thing was the spirit of the Pharisees. And I think this extraordinary exception to the usual sweetness and forbearance of his words, when addressed to sinners, indicates a something special in His human character—its love of truth, of what was genuine. The single eye, the pure intention of the just, the genuine self-abjection of the true penitent—these drew Him towards them. What repelled Him, and that strongly, was self-righteousness and malignity under the cloak of piety, in one word—pride.

In our Lord's hatred of the Pharisees, as contrasted with His forbearance towards publicans and sinners, we read what is a speaking commentary on the dispositions of His Heart. Without it we should miss something which sets before us the full beauty of the sacred Manhood.[1]

XIX. *PHILIP AND NATHANIEL*

S. John i. 43–51.

The Gospels are continually giving us examples of holy friendship, and the history of the calling of the Apostles is beautified by indications of such a tie between members of that sacred fellowship. Andrew and another, who is not named, but who was probably S. John himself, are together with S. John the Baptist when he first points out to them "the Lamb of God." Together they follow Jesus. Together He invites them to His own home, and they abide with Him the whole of that day. A day spent with Jesus in His own home was, doubtless, a day never to be forgotten; but we are told nothing more about it. When at last they went away, Andrew hastened to find his own brother, Peter, that he might share with him the blessed news. "We have found the Messiah"—that told all that needed to be told. Peter believed his brother's word, and Andrew lost no time, but "brought him to Jesus."

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[1] It may be well to remind the reader, that though our Lord had not passions, as we have, that can carry away our wills, He possessed what are called "pro-passions," movements that were always completely under the control of His Will, and only roused at His command. Thus, for instance, He was angry with the buyers and sellers in the Temple, and fear and sadness filled His soul in the garden, but never in a way to obscure reason or weaken His Will, but only in obedience to His command. —[Ed].

Then the next day our Lord meets Philip and calls him, saying, "Follow Me," and Philip obeys. But he, too, felt the necessity of communicating his joy and his grace to another friend. He found Nathaniel and declared that in Jesus of Nazareth they had found the promised Messiah. Nathaniel, when he heard of Nazareth, doubted, but Philip's only argument was, "Come and see." He felt sure that, if he could only bring his friend into the presence of Jesus, the cause would be gained. To see Him and to hear Him would be better than any argument. *Veni et vide:* "Come and see."

Nathaniel followed his friend, and Jesus waited for him and saw him coming. Nathaniel did not know Jesus, but Jesus knew him. He knew his simple upright heart, and that, if he had not been quick in receiving Philip's report, it was from no lack of faith. He knew him down to the very centre of his soul, and, as he approached, welcomed him with the gracious words, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!"

The only feeling with which Nathaniel heard these words was one of surprise. He felt no vanity and self-love at hearing himself praised, only wonder how Jesus could have known him. "Whence knowest Thou me?" as much as to say—We never met till this moment. You never so much as saw me before; and yet you pretend to know me! And with one little word Jesus scatters his doubts and makes him understand that, if he, Nathaniel, had never before seen Jesus, the eye of that Divine Master had rested on him, and followed him, and reached him to the very heart. "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." "When thou wast under the fig-tree" —we have heard nothing of the fig-tree before this. The fig-tree is a sort of scriptural figure for home. We seem to see Nathaniel sitting in his own garden, under the shadow of his own fig-tree, meditating at eventide, occupied with his own guileless thoughts, and never dreaming that another eye was beholding him and marking him as its own. Nathaniel had not been quick in receiving Philip's report, but when he heard this word from the lips of Jesus, it was enough. "Rabbi," he says, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." What a bold, magnificent act of faith, worthy of a heart without guile! And Jesus answered, "Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest: greater things than these shalt thou see."

This page in S. John's Gospel is full of sweetness and beauty. It shows us the Apostles in the early spring-time of their faith and their knowledge of our Lord, a company of guileless souls, full of charity one for another and full of good-will. They believe easily; they follow when Jesus calls; they discern Him; and then their one thought is to make others know Him also, and specially those to whom they are united in bonds of friendship. Then how sweet the picture is of Nathaniel sitting under his fig-tree, and our Lord almost playfully, if we may so say, letting him know that He had beheld him there. What, in his privacy and solitude? Yes, for there is no solitude where we are hidden from His eyes. It is as if He said to us also, "You did not think of it; but I beheld you—when you were in choir, or passing through the cloister; when you were walking in the garden, or visiting the sick, or teaching in the school, yesterday—or the day before—I saw you."

This is a very sweet thought. Books often seek to represent the continual presence of God as a sort of terror to sinners—as though He were only beholding our guilty thoughts and evil deeds. But He sees more than that. He beholds us in our better moments as well as our worse. He watches us at our prayers. He knows our desires after the better things. He keeps us company in quiet moments, when passion is at rest and the world forgotten. He sees us under the fig-tree; and though we know it not, He sees us to the centre of our hearts. For is He not the God of our heart, and our portion for ever?

XX. "*THE GIFT OF GOD*"

"If thou didst know the gift of God. —S. John iv. 10.

A resting-place in the road leading to the city of Sichem, in Samaria; a well resorted to by the inhabitants to draw water, and venerable in their eyes as having been first used by the patriarch Jacob; there, seated by the well-side, under the shade, perhaps, of a few palm-trees, was a solitary way-worn traveller, "wearied with the journey," says the Evangelist, for He had made it on foot. Weary, and also, as it seems, exhausted for want of food, for His disciples had gone into the city to buy bread. It was, moreover, "the sixth hour," that is, noon-day; and the weary traveller was parched with thirst in that burning heat.

The traveller was Jesus. There is scarcely any passage in the Gospels in which He is presented to us more visibly in the weakness of His human nature. He condescends, not only to be weak, weary, and exhausted, but to seek the assistance of one of His own creatures to supply His necessities. A woman of Samaria comes to the well to draw water, and He says to her, "Give Me to drink."

Here we pause. In the first place, He who multiplied the loaves and fed five thousand by miracle could certainly have provided for Himself, had He so chosen, without asking the help of any one. But we never read of His working a miracle to supply His own necessities. In the desert He did not command the stones to be made bread. He did not cause the barren fig-tree miraculously to bear fruit. He did not come down from the Cross; neither did He at this time supply Himself with a draught of cold water, by the word of power which He could so easily have spoken. He asked the aid of His own creature—of a woman—and a woman who was a Samaritan and a sinner. It was as though He rejoiced at the opportunity of thus humbling Himself and veiling His Divine Nature.

Moreover, she had no sort of comprehension of the dignity of Him who spoke to her. She showed no readiness or solicitude to serve Him—not so much as a kind-hearted woman might have shown to an ordinary wayfarer. In her reply she seemed rather disposed to make difficulties and to raise the question of Jew and Samaritan, by way of excusing herself from complying with His request. Instead of hastening to draw the water and give Him to drink, she taunted Him with being a Jew.

How did He reply? In words which she did not indeed understand, but which might sufficiently have taught her that He to whom she spoke was not as other men. "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou peradventure wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." But as yet the woman comprehended nothing; she only looked, and saw that He had no rope with which to draw, and argued that the well was deep. Then our Lord spoke again, as though desiring to open her mind to divine things. He spoke of the living water springing up to everlasting life which He had it in His power to give; and still she comprehended nothing. She asked, indeed, " Give me this water " ; but she thought only of material water, and of being saved the trouble of coming to the well to draw. Then our Lord spoke to her conscience and made known to her that He saw the secrets of her heart; and then at length He condescended to declare to her who He was, even Christ, the Messias : " I am He who am speaking with thee."

The narrative, which is told with much more minuteness of detail than is ordinary in the Gospels, impresses us first with a sense of loving and reverent compassion for the Good Shepherd, who wearied Himself going about to seek and to save His wandering sheep. We see Him sitting there, patiently and meekly waiting for this soul, to whom He has resolved to bring a message of divine grace. There is an allusion to it in the *Dies Iræ: Quaerens me sedisti lassus*—" Thou didst sit weary, seeking me." And it is His wont thus not only to seek for sinful souls, but to wait for them patiently. How many do we not know for whom He has thus " waited " ? Did He not wait for me, and wait long, whilst I was dull, negligent, forgetful, and indifferent ? Does He not so wait every day in the Blessed Sacrament ? There He abides—silent, companionless, forsaken. How many visit Him or keep watch with Him ? He does not complain ; He waits if, peradventure, at the end of the long day He may be able to say a word of salvation to one soul.

Next observe the patience with which He takes this coarse unspiritual nature in hand, and gradually opens her mind, and calls her back to better things, which had been hidden away and covered over by a life of sin. Yet she had once been taught to look for the Messias ; and when that early faith of her childhood returns to her, she says, " When He is come, He will tell us all things." She had not thought of that hope and promise when she came to the well, but it had revived in her soul whilst she had been speaking with Jesus. This is just what we may confidently hope will always be the result of an hour spent with Him in prayer. We may go to Him, cold, indifferent, and without sensible devotion, but, if we open our hearts before Him, we shall not remain so. "I am He who am speaking with thee." He will speak to us. That is the way in which the light and the grace will come. In prayer it is not so much what we say to God, as what God says to us, that works the change.

But now, take some of these words that He spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If thou didst know the gift of God." These words always remind me of those other words of our Lord, spoken as He gazed, weeping, on Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace" (S. Luke xix. 42). They express an ardent mournful longing that we did know. And how few in this cold unbelieving world do really know the gift of God! They do not so much reject it as live absolutely unconscious of its existence. We may go into the crowded streets, or through the lanes of country villages, it matters little where we turn, the words are equally applicable wherever we look about us, and see men coming and going. They know many things nowadays—sciences, politics, languages, arts—but they do not know "the gift of God." If they did but know that gift, how different it would be with them! How different the world would be!

And what is "the gift of God"?

In the first place, it is our Lord Himself. "God so loved the world, that He gave us His only-begotten Son" (S. John iii. 16, 17). He did not lend Him to us for thirty-three years; He gave Him, once and for ever. He is ours. "Unto us the Son is given" (Isa. ix. 6). How many of us really know this gift or care for it? If any one gave us a diamond necklace or a purse or gold, we should value it more, or at any rate we should set more store by it, than we do by the gift of God.

Then, secondly, it is Divine grace, His great gift, dispensed by Him so lavishly, wasted by us so carelessly, trodden every day under foot, despised, sinned against every hour, but always waiting for us, if we choose to seek it, in the Sacrament of reconciliation. Certainly, if we consider all that is taught us of the necessity, the magnificence of divine grace, and the immense value of one degree of it, we may truly imagine our Lord sorrowfully beholding our contempt of it, and saying, " Didst thou but know the gift of God ! "

And thirdly, it is the Blessed Sacrament. That is the greatest of all the gifts which He has given to men, just because it is Himself. Drive through the streets of London and see the people hurrying about. Here and there is a Catholic Church with its Blessed Sacrament reserved in it. No one knows it. There standeth one amongst them whom they know not. If the Queen were to drive past, they would all crowd to stare and wonder. God is abiding there in the midst of them, in real living presence, day and night, and they know it not. Some know it—a very few chosen souls, to whom He has given, the gift of faith. One would suppose that, of these, at least, some would always be kneeling there, keeping watch ; that they would never leave Him alone. But even to those who believe He has reason to say sorrowfully, " If thou didst " really " know the Gift of God ! "

One other application of these words. It is the gift, the marvellous gift of faith. Those, perhaps, most nearly know what it is who know what it was to be without it. The world without faith was dark indeed. Life was a mystery and an enigma. As the old Saxon said, " We know nothing of whence we came, nor whither we go." And, possessing this gift ourselves, we wander up and down, saying sadly to ourselves as we look abroad, " O world of souls ! O beloved country ! O all that are dear, did you but know the gift of God !

Why do I know it, and not you ? What a change in all things would be wrought, did you but know ! "

And, if we desire it, how much more does our Lord Himself ? He waits, longing to make Himself known. He desires to pour forth over the whole world those streams of living water. But He knows also the coldness and indifference even of those who know the gift, and so He adds one word which might well make us weep as we read it, " If thou didst know the Gift of God, peradventure thou wouldst ask of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

He will certainly give it to us if we ask ; but if we ask or no hangs on a chance. Perhaps we shall. But our seizing that precious gift and making it our own is not a certainty ; it is only a " peradventure " ! This is just the real sorrow, the real and bitter disappointment. It is sad enough that so few know the gift, but sadder a thousand times that, of those who do know it, it is only a chance whether they care to use it or no.

Do we not feel as if we must fling ourselves at His feet, sitting there as He does, all weary with bearing with our indifference, and protest that for us, at least, there shall be no " peradventure " ? We do ask Him for the water of life ; we ask Him for nothing else. If He is thirsting to save us, we also are thirsting to be saved. If He is longing for our love, we on our side are longing to give it to Him. No more " peradventures," no more delay ; but now, this very moment, we will give Him our act of homage, and never abandon Him again.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

XXI. *S. JOHN THE BAPTIST*

" He was in the deserts "—S. Luke i.

Our Divine Lord said of the Baptist, that among those born of women there was none greater than he. This is enough to teach us to love and venerate him. And he is one of the few characters that appear in the Gospel whose whole life is given us, from his birth to his death. This could not have been without a reason. Manifestly his life is so given that we may study it, and know it well. He is one of the great figures of the Gospel.

Of the beginning of his history we may make a brief summary. His birth, miraculous and foretold by an Angel—the very same Angel Gabriel who was to be the messenger of the Incarnation; the fact also revealed to our Blessed Lady, at the very same time that her own inconceivable privilege of being the Mother of God was declared to her; and this, that she, rising with haste, might go into the hill-country of Judea to salute her cousin Elizabeth, and be the instrument for the sanctification of S. John, even before his birth. Born, therefore, cleansed from original sin, a privilege next in order to that of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady herself; named by the Angel—and with such circumstances that, at his birth, all those who heard of what had passed feared, and laid up these things in their hearts saying, " What a one, think you, shall this child be, for the hand of the Lord is with him ? "—here is a history of wonders even before and up to the time of his birth. Two of the Canticles of the Church are connected with this history, and we recite them daily in her Office. All this would suffice to make us understand that, as the Angel had prophesied, he that was so born was to be " great before the Lord."

We must turn back to the Angel's words to understand in what S. John's greatness was to consist. He was to be a Nazarite from his birth; even from his mother's womb he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost. He was to convert many souls to God; to go before Him—that is, before God, incarnate in the Person of Jesus—in the spirit and power of Elias; to turn hearts and prepare for the Lord a perfect people. He was to fulfil the prophecy of Isaias, and to be the "Voice crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths" (S. Matt. iii. 3).

Thus was his course clearly foretold and marked out before he was born into the world; and I think we are bound to suppose that the manner in which his parents brought him up was not the result merely of their own thoughts, but had also been divinely indicated to them. "He grew up and was strengthened in spirit, and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel."

Evidently, his career was to be an exceptional one. It was to be heroic and not of this world; he was to work in the spirit of Elias, that is, of the Great Prophet, who stood alone in an evil day and an evil world; who stood before the face of kings, and was not ashamed; whom the world persecuted because he rebuked it, and who fled into the desert, and was fed by mysterious food, and in the strength of that bread journeyed to the Mount of God, even Horeb, and there held communings with God amid the thunder and the earthquake, and heard the still small voice of God. We can never think of Elias without thinking of the wilderness, and the juniper-tree, and the great and strong wind overthrowing the mountains and breaking the rocks to pieces, and the cave on Horeb wherein he abode; and then of the gentle air, of which when he heard the whisper, he came forth to the mouth of the cave, and covered his face with his mantle, because he knew it was the voice of God (3 Kings xix.).

S. John was to go forth in the spirit of Elias, and so he was to be nurtured in the wilderness, and to learn its teaching. Flesh and blood were not to teach him. He was to have nothing to do with the world, or its ways, or its maxims. He was to prepare for his great mission in the desert, and God was to be his teacher; and, even as Moses prepared for his mission in the desert of Horeb, alone with the flock of Jethro, so did S. John prepare—in the wilderness.

By the deserts or the wilderness, we do not necessarily understand a sandy desolate region of burning heat destitute either of shade or water. We understand some solitude, probably among the mountains, of which man has not taken possession, which is as God made it, its rocks unhewn, its soil uncultivated, its forests never yet resounding to the woodman's axe. The birds resort thither fearless of the fowler, the wild beasts find there their prey by day, and at night they lay them down in its caves and dens; the wild flowers wreathe themselves at will about its thickets; the lily grows among the thorns, with the flowers of the field and the lilies of the valley. The dove builds her nest in the clefts of the rock; and up from this desert comes the scent of aromatical spices, for there is "the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense" (Cant. iv. 6).

Is the desert among the hills of Libanus? There, then, are the mighty cedars, "the cedars of Libanus, which the hand of God has planted" (Ps. ciii. 16), and there are the wells of living waters which run with a strong stream from Libanus. And there are "the dens of the lions and the mountains of the leopards" (Cant. iv. 8); there the wild ass roams at liberty, to whom the Lord "has given a house in the wilderness, and his dwellings in the barren land" (Job. xxxix. 6). There is the eagle, "abiding among the rocks, and dwelling among craggy flints and stony hills, where there is no access" (Job xxxix. 28). There "the high hills are a refuge for the harts" (Ps. ciii. 18); "a refuge where they escape away from the hunter, and seek the high places where none can follow them."

There, when the noon-day heat arises, is "the shadow of the great rock in the desert land;" there, among those rocks, are places for "a man to hide himself from the wind and the storm" (Isa. xxxii. 2). A desert indeed, but a desert which "shall be counted as Carmel," "the joy of wild asses, the pasture of flocks" (Isa. xxxii. 14, 15); a desert in which, to the eyes that read it, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" (Isa. xl. 5); and to the ear that can hear it, the voice of the Lord shall speak in majesty. For "the voice of the Lord is upon the waters, and the God of Majesty has thundered—the Lord upon many waters—the voice of the Lord in power and magnificence, breaking the cedars, even the cedars of Libanus, shaking the desert, and discovering the thick bushes—making all things to speak His glory" (Ps. xxviii.).

These are but a very few of the words in which Holy Scripture draws its images from the beauty, the grandeur, and the mighty terrors of the wilderness. I quote them that we may the better understand on what thoughts and by what external means S. John was nurtured. If we were to study carefully the Psalms, the Book of Job, and the writings of the Prophets, it would be truly wonderful to see how profoundly they are steeped in what I will call the spirit of the wilderness. God's earth, unsullied by the footsteps of man, was the meditation-book of the Old Testament Saints. They read in Nature lessons of God's Power and Providence, and His awful presence. It filled them with worship and reverence, with the sense that God was all in all, that His Name was hallowed, and that His Will must be done. It would not be true to say that the spirit of the old saints was not one of love; for who loved God better than Abraham and David? But it was not exactly the love revealed to us in the Gospels, that love of infinite tenderness, which was born when God took flesh of Mary and became a little child. The spirit of the wilderness was the spirit of worship. It saw God in every flower of the field; it heard Him in the winds and in the voices of many waters. It praised Him in creation; it feared Him in judgment. It desired that He should reign over the whole earth and have His rights.

In this spirit S. John the Baptist grew up and was nurtured from childhood. The world left no stamp upon him; he neither knew it nor cared for it. He was solicitous for nothing that it could give or take away; its very necessities were no necessities to him, whom the wild honey and the camel's hair supplied with food and clothing. For its learning also he cared nothing at all. A book was spread out before his eyes which taught him other lessons than he could learn from human masters. The wild beasts were his companions, as they seem to have been the companions of Jesus, when He too spent forty days in the desert, but he did not fear them, and they did not molest him.

S. John was preparing for a mighty mission, which was to convert the hearts of many; and he did so by first seeking God, and God only, in his own heart. "I will lead her into the wilderness," the Prophet had said, "and I will speak to her heart" (Osee ii. 14). And into the wilderness he was called, that in its solitude his heart might seek and find God. He was to prepare the way for One greater than himself; and before he did so by his preaching, he did it by his prayer. "Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert, to the Mount of the daughter of Sion" (Isa. xvi. 1). So would he pray who was to be the first to recognise and proclaim the Lamb of God. "Oh! that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down; and the mountains would melt at Thy Presence" (Isa. lxiv. 1).

This time of prayer and preparation lasted until his thirtieth year or thereabouts, when, still "in the desert," the word of the Lord came to him, and sent him forth into all the country of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance and the remission of sins.

XXII. S. *JOHN THE BAPTIST*—(*Continued*)

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."—S. LUKE iii.

S. JOHN has come forth from the desert into the world; and the precise time of his doing so is given by S. Luke as an event of the greatest importance in the Gospel history. He came, not by his own will, but by the direct call of God. "The word of the Lord was made unto John the son of Zachary, in the desert" (S. Luke iii. 2).

Leaving his home in the wilderness, therefore, he came into the country round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance. The way in which he was to prepare the way of the Lord was by turning men from their sins. It was penance that was to make the rough ways plain and to bring low every mountain and every hill. The advent of such a preacher in his garment of camel's hair and his leathern girdle, his fearless eloquence and his utter separation from all that savoured of the world, could not but attract the notice of men; and so multitudes flocked about him and demanded his baptism. He spoke to them severely enough. They were to flee from the wrath to come; they must not trust to being the children of Abraham if they did not bring forth worthy fruits of penance. The axe was laid at the root of the tree; and, if it did not now bring forth fruit, it would be hewn down and cast into the fire. His words struck his hearers to the heart. "What, then, shall we do?" they cried. And in reply he spoke to them of poverty and alms-deeds: let them give of their superfluities to those who were in need, whether in food or clothing—that would be a practical proof of penance. The people listened and were filled with admiration. There is something in real penance which always commands the world's respect, whether it be imitated or not.

Gradually people came to the Baptist for direction. Persons of all ranks, classes, and occupations came, and then the guidance of the Holy Spirit manifested itself in the wonderful wisdom of his words. He, the hermit of the wilderness, was no fierce zealot, demanding of his disciples impossible sacrifices; he did not bid them go and expiate their sins in the desert, giving up worldly ties and worldly callings. If S. John were to appear in our own modern world as a preacher and director, he could not be more moderate in his requirements. To the publicans he said only, "Do nothing more than what is appointed you;" to the soldier, "Do violence to no one, and be content with your pay." This extreme moderation from one who might have been expected to denounce and execrate the world and all its belongings is truly wonderful. It profoundly impressed the people; they knew that the time of the Messiah was at hand, and they asked themselves if this were not He. Was not this the Christ? But S. John hastened to answer their doubts by preparing them for the coming of One mightier than he. He, John, baptized with water, but that Mighty One would baptize with the Holy Ghost. They reverenced him and sought after him as a teacher and a guide; but he knew himself not to be worthy so much as to loose the shoe-latchet of Him whose way he was preparing.

It is sometimes debated whether or no S. John had ever seen our Lord before he baptized Him. In Christian art he is often represented as the companion of the Holy Child, and we can hardly imagine that they would never have met, at least in their early years. S. John describes himself as "the friend of the bridegroom" (S.

John iii. 29). However that may be, they had probably not met since S. John had retired into the desert. But now they were to meet; and not only so, but the occasion of their meeting was to be the first public manifestation of our Lord to the people.

The baptism of our Lord in the Jordan is one of those events related by all four Evangelists. S. Matthew alone relates the fact of S. John's reluctance, out of humility, to administer baptism to Christ: "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (S. Matt. iii. 14). It was with that holy fear which is described in the office for the Octave of the Epiphany, that he touched the sacred head of his Redeemer, as He bowed it beneath the waters of the Jordan. S. Mark and S. Luke speak of the appearance of the dove and of the voice from heaven; S. John adds other particulars. He tells us that the very first time the Baptist met our Lord, he pointed Him out to the multitude, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God! behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world!" (S. John i. 29): words which show how entirely the sacred character and mission of our Lord had been revealed to him. He openly and plainly manifested to the people that which he had learnt from God. He on whom he had seen the Spirit descending was in truth the "Son of God." This he declared openly and without figure or mystery; and the next day, walking with two of his disciples, they met Jesus, whom beholding, he again exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Then comes one of those traits of S. John the Baptist's abnegation and humility which were the special graces of his character. The two disciples hearing him speak, left him and "followed Jesus" (S. John i. 37).

One of these disciples was Andrew, the brother of Peter. He, having found Jesus, sought his brother and brought him, saying to him, "We have found the Christ" (S. John i. 41). This, I say, was the grace of S.

John the Baptist. It was the grace he had learnt in the wilderness. What was it to one like him to be followed, and admired, and taken to be what he was not? The intense truth of his character revolted at the first approach of such false honours: "I am not the Christ. He is mightier than I; I am not worthy to unloose His shoe-latchet. He shall increase, and I shall decrease. I do but baptize with water; He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. I am the son of Zachary, a voice crying in the wilderness; I am the friend of the bridegroom, but not the bridegroom Himself; He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom rejoices to hear His voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. I am of the earth, and of the earth I speak; He that cometh from Heaven is above all." And finally he added, "He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting. For the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands" (S. Matt. iii.; S. Mark i.; S. Luke iii.; S. John i. and iii.).

The very fulness, therefore, of all Christian doctrine had been revealed to S. John. He spoke to the multitude of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; he declared that the Christ, the Messiah, was the Son of God; he recognised in Him, not merely a great Prophet, but the Lamb of God, who should take away the sin of the world; and he declared that faith in Him should be the condition of life eternal.

What wonder that he who could so speak of Christ should deserve to be praised by the very mouth of Christ Himself! He declared that of all that were "born of women, there was not a greater than John the Baptist" (S. Matt. xi. 11; S. Luke vii. 28). And the Church, following the indications of her Divine Lord, has given S. John a pre-eminence among all the Saints. She reckons him apart, as the Forerunner. This is his special and exclusive privilege. Strictly speaking, he is not reckoned as a martyr for the faith, neither is he an apostle. He stands alone—as in his sanctity, so in his mission. When we think of him, whether in his life or in his death, the lesson he teaches is self-abnegation and separation from the spirit of the world; and not only so, but self-abnegation, because he was not of the world. For how could one who was so utterly dead to the world care whether he increased or decreased in its estimation? He cared for God and His glory, and nothing else. This was what took him in his garment of camel's hair to the court of King Herod to reprove him for his sin. This it is which I call "the spirit of the wilderness," to which the world and its pomps, and the figure thereof, is something less than a reed shaken by the wind. Of this spirit S. John is the model and patron; may he obtain it for me in large measure!

XXIII. *CHRIST IN THE HEART*

"That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth. To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God." —EPH. iii. 17–19.

THIS is one of those sentences of S. Paul which takes one's breath away as one reads it, in which he masses together great and sublime thoughts, one on another, like mountain upon mountain. The words should be taken one by one; and each word is a volume.

He prays for his Ephesian converts that "Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith." This dwelling of Christ in the heart is the kernel of the interior life, of the prayer of recollection, of all union with God. It is the one thing all spiritual exercises tend to as their end and object; the one thing which, if attained, would make all perfection possible, all mortification easy; and the one thing which our bitter and life-long experience confesses we have failed to make our own, at any rate in the degree we might and ought to have attained, with such helps as have been lavished on us.

To make Christ dwell in our hearts is the end of our meditations on His Life and Passion ; we want to have His image so indelibly stamped there that it may never be absent from our memory. To dwell does not mean to visit. It is not a coming and going of sensible feelings. We dwell by making a place our home, living there day and night, and it is the constant, habitual, abiding presence of Christ in our heart that is to be the work of faith. If this presence is once established, it brings about that we shall, as the Apostle says, become " rooted and founded in charity," that is, in the love of God. These are words to dwell on : a life " rooted in charity " means a life all whose sap and movements have charity as their source. It means a total re-formation of our whole interior being, which by nature is founded on and rooted in self-love, the contradiction and enemy of the love of God. When this entire transformation is effected, we are made able to comprehend somewhat of what the saints understood by the " charity of Christ : " its " length," eternity ; its " breadth," infinity ; its " depth," the humility of the Incarnation ; its " height," to lift us up to the Throne of God. All these are separate points of meditation. And when we have dwelt on them all, ever so long and ever so profoundly, what remains save the conviction that the love of Christ is something that " surpasseth all knowledge " ?

One more point remains. The soul that has Christ dwelling in the heart is " filled with the fulness of God." What words ! What can " the fulness of God " be ? I do not know. What I do understand by these words is that we set our aim too low and expect too little, and therefore do not receive what we might and ought to receive. If there is an ever-flowing fountain, and we only present a tiny acorn-cup to be filled from it, it is our own fault if we receive but little. God is ready to give more if we ask more, and with greater confidence. It is not humility, but a narrow-hearted want of trust in the magnificent liberality of God, that makes us diffident in our hopes and little in our demands. No doubt we shall never drink of the whole torrent of Divine fulness in this life. Only in Heaven will all our capacities be so filled to overflowing; but even here they will be filled exactly in proportion as our hearts are rooted in charity. Therefore we must ask for more, and we shall receive more; and we must ask in faith, nothing doubting, because, as the Apostle goes on to say, God "is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand" (Eph. iii. 20).

XXIV. *THE FOURFOLD TRIAL OF THE SOUL*

Ps. cvi.

I HAVE always loved this Psalm; and, even as a child, it seemed to me, as I said it, to be a picture of human life, its ups and downs, its darkness and sunshine, its trials and difficulties, and God delivering us out of all, if only we cry to Him in our distress. But S. Augustine explains it more particularly as setting before us the four chief trials of a soul, namely: first, the search after truth; second, the slavery of sin; third, purgation by dryness, disgust, and interior trials; and lastly, responsibility.

1. *The Search after truth.*—The Psalmist knew what that meant. So does every convert. So, perhaps, less emphatically, does every soul before it gives itself wholly to God. Until Faith claims us as her own, we wander about "in a wilderness without water," and "find no city to dwell in." Plenty of shifting opinions and views—but they give no abiding home to our souls. Doubt, uncertainty, the wish to believe—how like it all is to one wandering about in a pathless desert, not knowing which road to take, and always feeling that parching thirst for that water of truth which seems to fly before us like

a mirage, and never to let us drink at its pure fountain! Hungry and thirsty, our souls fainted within us, and the only remedy was to cry to the Lord in our trouble, that He would deliver us out of our distress. And He did deliver us: "He led them into the right way"—the way of Catholic Truth—of faith, clear, firm, and undoubting: "And they came to the city of their habitation," that is, to the Church which is the City of God. Oh, how truly is it the city of our habitation! Here will we dwell for ever and ever, for we have delight therein. It is the city that is built on a foundation, and is at unity with itself. It is the true Jerusalem that only has the vision of peace. So our first trial ended.

But faith is not all. It must lead to justice. Then begins the combat with all that faith teaches us to condemn.

2. *The spiritual warfare.* The struggle to beat down nature and to subject the soul and all its powers to the obedience of Christ. We praise God for His goodness, and for the wonders He has wrought in bringing us so far, for indeed "He has satisfied the empty soul, and fed it with good things," in giving it His Truth.

But, till justice has its perfect work, so long as pride and self-love and sensuality domineer over us, we are but slaves, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, fast bound in misery and iron. Yes, iron. Bad habits are iron chains: who does not know that? So long as we only see our misery, but persuade ourselves that we cannot shake off our chains, we are fast bound in iron. All our efforts and labours seem thrown away; we are so weak, and there is none to help us. None but One. He comes in due time, if we persevere in calling on Him. His grace breaks our fetters and sets us free. He leads our souls out of darkness, and shatters the chains of our bad habits. *Vincula eorum disrupit.* He delivers us from the way of our iniquity and breaks the bars of iron.

3. Well, then, the service of God will now be sweet

and easy; it is going to be well with us, and all our troubles are over. If, in a moment of elation, we think so, God in His mercy soon undeceives us. If He loves our soul, He will perfect it; and if He means to perfect it, He must chasten and purge it. Not by the sweetness of consolation, but by the hard ways of darkness, aridity, temptation, and weariness of spiritual things, it may be that He will purify and perfect His chosen ones. "Our souls abhor all manner of meat;" and, so far from feeling nearer to God, we feel as it were at death's door. The sensitive part of our soul, that wherein self-love makes its very nest and hiding-place, is torn to atoms. We cannot pray, or at least we think we cannot. And yet prayer is the only refuge, the only remedy. So, in the dark night of our purgation, whilst God, seems so far away, we yet do cry to Him in our tribulation, and once more He delivers us from out of our distress. His word heals us and delivers us; and when our trial is over, we are able to thank Him and offer Him a sacrifice of praise, and declare His wonderful works in the centre of our soul with exultation.

4. After trials of this kind, endured perhaps for many years, a soul is fitted at last to work for God, and to bear another kind of trial—that of responsibility. Would you like now to fly like a dove to the wilderness, to build your nest by the altar, to hide yourself from sights and sounds of humanity? Well, but what if God has been all this time fitting and preparing you for quite a different sort of life? To bear His burden, the burden of the Lord—souls, work in and for the world, sacrificing the sweets of solitude and sacrificing self in every form "for the brethren." That is Christ-like; and that is what He calls you to, maybe. Then begins the fourth trial. We have "to go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters." There, in the midst of life and life's troubles and perplexities, we do not fail to see "the wonders of the Lord."

The stormy winds blow (how hard they blow sometimes !), and the waves of the sea arise and toss themselves. We are tossed about with cares and perplexities ; we are carried up to heaven, and down again to the deep ; and, losing confidence, our souls melt away with trouble. We do not see our way ; everything seems giving way round us ; we stagger to and fro in our helplessness, and all our wisdom is " swallowed up." That is just the touch of God on our souls. Perhaps we thought much of this wisdom of ours, of our excellent judgment, and address, and management. Here we are in a fog of perplexity, and all our fancied " wisdom is swallowed up." What are we to do ? Nothing left but to cry to the Lord in our trouble, and He will deliver us out of our distress. " The moments of despair are God's moments." He helps us when at last we acknowledge from the very bottom of our souls that we cannot help ourselves. When our self-confidence is thoroughly in ruins, He comes, walking on the water, and bids the strong winds and waves to be still. Then we rejoice, because we are at rest, and so He brings us safe to the haven where we would be. And once more we praise Him for His goodness and for all the wonders He has wrought for the children of men. He who is wise will consider these things and understand the mercies of the Lord. For all His dealings with us, however mysterious they seem, are mercies, as much mercies when they plunge us into an abyss of trial, as when they fill us with joy and exultation. And through all He is always near us ; always at hand to be called to in our troubles ; always ready to deliver us out of our distress.

V. ON SOME OF THE LITURGICAL SEASONS AND FEASTS

Advent

XXV. *THE LAMB OF GOD*

Emitte Agnum, Domine, Dominatorem terrae, de Petra deserti ad montem filiae Sion.—Isa. xvi. 1.

"Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert to the Mount of the daughter of Sion."

We are beginning another Advent; and once more, as we enter on this holy season, we have been chanting the old familiar words, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down the just One; let the earth open and bud forth the Saviour" (Isa. xlv. 8); "Send forth the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert to the Mount of the daughter of Sion" (Isa. xvi. 1).

The words fall on our ears like some of those strains of music which seem to awaken associations we can neither analyse nor even express. Only it is as if a door opened and gave us a glimpse of another life and another world of infinite beauty and sweetness.

The heavens dissolve in dew, and rain forth a precious gift. The earth opens to receive it and buds forth her wonderful blossom. We hear the voice crying in the desert "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," and through the barren rocky desert He passes—the Lamb who is to be the Ruler of the earth, the Lamb we hope one day to follow "whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. xiv. 4). He passes over the sharp rocks and barren sand, leaving the print of His footsteps in blood; and we follow Him over those rough stony ways, the "desert and pathless land, where no water is,"[1] and He guides us at last to the Mountain of Sion, and there He stands as it were enthroned, and the waters of life eternal gush forth at

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[1] *In terra deserta, invia et inaquosa* (Ps. lxii. 3).

His feet. It was thus S. Clement beheld Him, and thus He is depicted in the old Basilicas, where we see the desert and the mount, and the Lamb standing thereon, and the faithful grouped around and drinking of those flowing waters.

What do these words mean ? They speak to us of the great gift of God to man, the gift by which we are redeemed and regenerated, and grafted into the Divine life. In every variety of beautiful language, all through this time of Advent, we shall be told to expect Him who is coming to redeem us from slavery, to lead the captive out of prison, and to break his bonds, and to enlighten those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death (Isaias).

It is the language of hope and expectation ; but there is always the double note, the double thought of captivity and deliverance, of darkness and light, of the rocky desert and the mountains dropping with dew and honey.

In other words, we are reminded, at one and the same time, of our misery when left to ourselves, and of our fulness and riches when united to Him. For fallen nature is indeed a barren rock, and the world without God a howling wilderness ; and to walk in it alone is to wander in desert ways without path and without water.

And into this desolate world the Lamb was sent forth, that He might traverse its sharpest and dreariest ways, and that by so doing He might transform it into a watered garden. And so, when Christmas night comes at last, and we are watching at the Crib, the Church breaks forth into song, and declares how the heavens have melted into sweetness, and the day of a new redemption has dawned, and the past has been repaired, and the doors of everlasting felicity have been thrown open.

You see then the lesson which these familiar Advent words contain He for whose coming in the flesh we are preparing is our life. Without Him our natural life is nothing but the hard rock of the barren desert; no seed cast on it will take root; no waters of refreshment will spring forth from it. If, without Him, and apart from Him, we try to work out an imaginary sanctity, it will be a failure. Sanctity is no piecing together of self-conceived virtues; it is the love of Jesus and the life of Jesus made manifest in our life.

If then we find ourselves feeble, languishing, oppressed, and discouraged, with the pulses of our spiritual life low, and a certain hardness and barrenness makes itself sensible in our hours of prayer, we need not go very far to find the reason. We are in the desert without Jesus; we have somehow wandered away from Him, and lost sight of Him; we have but to seek Him out again and to get closer to Him; and we may be sure that the Heavens will once more drop down dew and the clouds will dissolve in sweetness.

Christmas

XXVI. *THE SHEPHERDS*

S. Luke ii. 8–20.

How often, in reading the Gospels, we want to know more of some of those who figured there. They appear for a moment and then disappear, and we long to follow them afterwards. The young man whom Jesus loved, did he really reject the grace offered? He went away, but surely he came back later. The widow's son, what did he do with the life Jesus restored to him? And the woman of Samaria, our Lord's own convert *par excellence*, what was her after-course?.

So of the Shepherds; we just know them for this one moment, and then not a word more; and, I believe, not even a tradition. Yet they must have been souls very dear to God and highly privileged; so He has given them the destiny of privileged souls, and kept them in obscurity.

Well, at any rate, for this one night of the Nativity they are with us—old friends whom we know well. Shepherds of Bethlehem, that is all we know, not even their names. God seems specially to love the shepherd's life, because it is the type of His own. He is the one chief Pastor, the Good Shepherd; and He chooses to call faithful souls His sheep. Abel, Jacob, Moses, David were all shepherds. It is a privileged life, one of contemplation and separation from the world. Shepherds feed their flocks on the hills or in the wilderness. When Moses fed the sheep of Jethro, "he drove the flock to the inner parts of the desert, and came to the Mountain of God, Horeb" (Exod. iii. 1). This was very different from the court of Pharao. Then God appeared to him in the burning bush.

David fed his father's flock at Bethlehem, therefore it was fitting that the birth of the Son of David at Bethlehem should be made known by the shepherds. I have said it was a life of contemplation, but also of labour and sacrifice. This same David had to fight with the lion and the bear. And, besides guarding his flock from wild beasts, the shepherd had to tend them in other ways and in all weathers.

We know nothing of the previous history of these shepherds. Simple as they were, they knew the promises of God. They expected the Saviour, and knew He was to be the Son of David. But, when they left their cottages that winter's night, and went out unto the hills to keep the night watches, watching their flocks, they expected nothing of that which was to come to pass. The night was like other nights, although one fancies it must have had a special sweetness and silence about it. In our office for Matins which we say on Christmas night, there is a word which always seems to describe its character: "*Hodie per totum mundum melliflui facti sunt cœli.*"[1] The shepherds sat on the grass, and their sheep fed around them, or lay couched on the soft turf. The stars looked down from the blue vault, so calmly and peacefully. " Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour " (Isa. xlv. 8). Of this night we read in the Book of Wisdom, " While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven, from Thy royal throne " (Wisdom xviii. 14, 15).

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[1] "To-day, throughout the whole world, the heavens have dropped down honey."

" All things were in quiet silence," for the shepherds were men of God ; and in the hours of their night-watches they would not break the silence with rude laughter or with idle words. Their hearts were with God. They were neither poets nor prophets ; and yet being pure and faithful souls, they unconsciously felt the influence of the hour and the nearness of God and the Holy Angels. Afterwards perhaps, when they spoke together of the memory of that blessed night, they might have said, " Did not our hearts burn within us, as we lay watching in the silence ? "

Often, without knowing any particular cause, we do feel such special influences. Sometimes, when watching before the Blessed Sacrament, or at other times when engaged in ordinary duties, there comes on us a hush, a sense of peace, as though the world were removed a million miles away from us. All disturbing thoughts have vanished ; the air is full of a kind of balm ; and we wonder if it may not be that an angel has been by our side and dropped the dewy fragrance from his wings before he passed back to Heaven. So we love to think it must have been with the shepherds, " when all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course."

Their hearts were full of peace and worship, when, " behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them." The vision was one sensible to their eyes, of exceeding beauty and glory : " the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear." It is the nature of Divine visions, we are told, to inspire fear first and confidence afterwards. The very humility of the shepherds would make them afraid.

When Moses saw the burning bush, he put off the shoes from his feet and worshipped. When S. John beheld " One like to the Son of Man " (Apoc. i. 13), he fell at His feet as one dead. And Daniel also, when he beheld the Angel Gabriel, fell at his feet fainting, and no strength remained in him. In all probability, the angel who appeared to the shepherds was Gabriel, the Angel of the Incarnation, and his extraordinary splendour is signified by the words that " the brightness of God shone round about." What wonder, then, if the shepherds " feared with a great fear ! "

Thrice before is S. Gabriel named in Holy Scripture, and each time he utters the words " Fear not " : to Daniel, to Zachary, and again to our Blessed Lady. " Fear not, Daniel " (Dan. x. 12) ; " Fear not, Zachary " (S. Luke i. 13) ; " Fear not, Mary " (S. Luke i. 30). He always appears as bringing comfort and good tidings, so splendid that he strikes terror into mortal hearts, but so sweet and tender that he reassures them. And to the shepherds also he says, " Fear not "—and though he is not here named, we recognise him by those very words.

" Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people." Not merely tidings of joy, but " good tidings of great joy." Not for you only, but for " all the people." Angels are indeed our sweetest friends—they are always messengers of joy " Father," said the young Tobias, speaking of the angel Raphael, " he gave joy " (Tob. xii. 3). Then the angel went on to speak of the birth of Jesus—" the Saviour who is Christ the Lord," and to give the shepherds the sign by which they should find Him—" You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger ; " then, " suddenly "—what a power of description there is in that word !—" suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God." It was like the burst of a full organ chorus, following on a sweet strain of music. " A multitude " —the whole heavens seemed full of them, wing upon wing, glory upon glory, a multitude so vast that the shepherds could not number them any more than we can number the stars above us. They were a host, an army in rank and order ; for in heavenly things there is always order ; and their voices made an exquisite harmony as they sang in the ears of the shepherds the new song, heard on earth for the first time that Christmas night, but destined to be repeated in the holy sacrifice every day and in every place till the end of time, *Gloria in excelsis !* " Glory to God in the highest ! "

Happy shepherds, to be the first to hear it ! Happy shepherds, for, beyond a doubt, they must have been " men of good will," or they would not have been chosen to hear it from the lips of angels. Happy shepherds ! to be the first to taste that peace, which was the Christmas gift which angels that night brought from heaven to earth.

" Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." Oh, if it could be so ! If this might be all, and nothing more ! To God glory, and glory in the highest. His due—His rights—His name hallowed—His kingdom come !

On earth—the poor earth, torn by divisions and suffering, and wars and fightings, and sin—peace ; and for men, that they may taste this peace—good will ! If only all might be " men of good will " ! If only malice might flee away for ever ! Weakness there will be and misery, but not malice, no more malice, only good will !

The song was ended, and the angels " departed from them into heaven." How the shepherds must have strained their eyes to follow them ! Did they depart suddenly as they came ? And, when they were gone, did all seem as it seemed before? Yes, there was the quiet hillside; there were the gentle stars above; and below, the soft turf, and the sheep couched there undisturbed.

Angels come and go often enough on this earth, and men do not heed. I do not suppose that any one in Bethelehem or on the roads leading to the mountain had seen any glory or heard the angelic canticle. So perhaps often enough angels are round about us, in the Sanctuary at Mass, in our choir, or our cloisters, or among the trees of the garden, and we know it not. They walk beside us, they whisper to us in moments of desolation, "Fear not." They move us to give glory to God. They bring us peace; it flows in upon us in floods, and we wonder whence it comes, not perceiving the angel-messenger. They are ever pleading for men of good will; and we feel the good desire awakening in our heart, and owe it to the unseen guardian-friend who never forgets us. And so that night only the shepherds had seen and heard the angels. When at last they departed, only one thought was in the minds of all; "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this word which has come to pass, which the Lord hath shown to us."

They did not say, "Let us see if this word has come to pass," but, "Let us go and see it." And they went "with haste." They left their flocks without solicitude, probably without a thought. The angels would guard them. Anyhow, what they had to do was to go over to Bethlehem, and to go with haste. It reads as if Bethlehem lay on the other side of the valley—how far off we know not. Nor do we know how they were directed to the cave used for a stable; all we know is that "they found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in the manger," even as the angel had told them; and beholding, they believed. They were the first adorers of the Holy Child, after His Blessed Mother and S. Joseph: and beholding Him, "they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child." They "understood," for the angels had opened their understanding, and they had obtained the great illumination of Divine faith. So they believed and adored. Here then we see them, as we so often like to represent them, kneeling before the crib. There is the new-born Infant, delighting to receive the homage of His first worshippers; Joseph and Mary; the stable, the ox, the ass, the manger and the straw, and the shepherds: we see it all.

It is a scene which the Church has taken possession of and made her own. Century after century it is reproduced every Christmas night in every Christian household. It is dear to us all: old men and children kneel there with the shepherds and bless the name of the Lord. The shepherds, from that moment, become dear old friends: we could never keep Christmas without them. We always salute them, saying, *Quid vidistis, Pastores?*[1] "What, O shepherds, have ye seen?" We are told a little more about them; for we read that they related all that happened, and that those who heard "wondered." "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." Happy shepherds! we say again, whose words deserved to be kept and pondered in the Immaculate Heart of Mary!

Lastly, we read that "they returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." They returned to their cottage homes, and to their sheep, which they had left on the mountains. They returned, I think to their shepherd life: none other would ever be so dear to them, so full of sweet and sacred memories. They would love to lead their flocks again and again to those same pastures, and to keep the night-watches over them on the same hills. From time to time they would speak together of that night, and of its glory and its joy, and together they would sing the words they had heard sung by the host of heaven, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace to men of Good will ! "

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[1] First Antiphon of Lauds, Christmas night.

The Epiphany

XXVII. *THE THREE KINGS*

S. MATT. ii. 1–11.

WHAT is there half so wonderful and beautiful as the starry heavens ? The sea is very vast, and it gives us a feeling of the infinite, but nothing like the heavens. World upon world, we cannot count them ; and we know, that, far beyond where our eye can reach, there are more and more, all suns and worlds, bigger and more magnificent than our own little world, and rich in every kind of variety.

Then we know all about the sea. We can sail on it, and plunge into it, and measure it. But the stars in their beauty are far beyond our grasp. We know nothing of their history, except that God made them ; and so they declare His glory, and show themselves to be His handiwork, and tell us that the boundless universe is as nothing to the infinite God who created it.

But how beautiful it is ! And, though science may reveal to us that all is moving and changing in it, to our eye one of its chief features is silent, changeless repose. Millions of years ago, before I existed, there shone and twinkled those lovely stars. Job saw Orion as I see it, and the Pleiades ; and he watched them from the great plains of Arabia, and knew something about them which we do not know, when he spoke of their " sweet influences."

O gentle light of stars ! what have you looked down on all these years ? You two linked beauties in Lyra ! You shone just above the fir-grove that was opposite my window when I was a chlld, when Cassipoeia used to shine over the sea. How often I watched you in those nights, before I knew what to believe or what to love except beauty. Sixty years have fled away, and there you are still; and you seem to say to me, "Yes, go on loving beauty; only let it be the Beauty that will never fade."

These stars, bright as they are to us, are far brighter and more beautiful in the heavens which stretch over the wide plains of Arabia and Assyria. There is not much beauty in those plains: no hills, no woods, only desolate wastes of sand and rocks; and all round about, the wide unbroken horizon. But in that clear atmosphere the stars have a beauty we cannot picture to ourselves here. There is nothing else to attract the eye; and for that reason, perhaps, they came to be so very much to the wise men of that country. They had no mountains or romantic glens to love, as people love them who are born in such places. They had nothing but the stars: and so the stars were all in all to them.

Almighty God is so good that He speaks to us in the way each one of us best understands. He had given our first parents a great promise, which was to be their faith, the one article of their Creed. It was the promise of a Saviour who was to come; and this promise was handed on to all people and all nations, now in one shape, and now in another; and prophet after prophet repeated it, and their words were listened to, and laid up, and became the sacred books of the old Jewish and Gentile world. To the dwellers in the wild Eastern wilderness, a prophet of God announced this promise by foretelling that one day a star would tell of His coming. So, century after century, the wise men of those regions, as they watched their beautiful heavens, watched and waited for the star.

The centuries went by, but there was nothing new in those heavens. Perhaps for the most part, people grew to think of the prophecy as of a poem or legend, hardly as anything real which was to come to pass. Only a few hearts here and there had taken it in and dwelt on it in faith; and among these were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthassar.

And so, when one night a star appeared not like other stars, in a spot where before no star had shone, not their science, but the faith that was in them, told them that it was the star promised to their fathers, and that it was there to tell them that the King was born and to lead them to His presence.

The King! what King? They were kings themselves, in a way—great chiefs of their people. But *the* King—there is, and can be, but one real King—the King of kings and Lord of lords. They knew that when He was born He would be King of the Jews. That was part of their revelation. It was not a little thing for these kings at once to resolve to go and find out, and do homage to the King of another nation. They had nothing to do with the Jews, and were not subject to them in any way. Why should they trouble themselves about a Jewish King? But their faith told them that He was more than a Jewish King. He was *their* King. So they must find Him and do Him homage.

They would not go empty-handed into the presence of such a mighty sovereign; they would bring Him the very best they had to give. Gold—that of course is fitting to a king, and it was found in their own land. And so were the myrrh and frankincense. No doubt there were mystical meanings; but I prefer to think that they chose these things because they were the best and choicest that they had. They must have been some time collecting their gifts and preparing for the journey. It was made no secret; but, when people heard what they were going to do, we may suppose that there were plenty of comments. "Going to look for a King of the Jews! what have we got to do with the Jews? We fought with them in old times, and now we are free of them, and the less we have to do with them the better. And how do they know anything about this wonderful

King ? They have seen a star ! No, you can't be serious—is that all ? Oh, that old legend ! Well, we have heard of it since we were boys ; but who ever dreamt of setting out on his camel for a long journey because he had seen a star ? But these very wise men do strange things ; too much learning and star-gazing turn their heads." That, and a great deal more, was probably said ; but the three gave it no heed. They had seen the star, and the faith had spoken in their hearts. Their King was waiting for them, and they must go and find Him. So they departed. It was a long journey. Journeys were long and slow in those days. You may watch them going along with their train of camels, encamping at night, and cheering themselves by watching that glorious star. It was not like other stars, for it had moved, and seemed to lead the way and bid them follow There was something in its light which seemed to penetrate into their very souls. " O Orient, splendour of eternal light ! "—perhaps it was so they prayed—" come and enlighten us who sit in darkness and the shadow of death ! " On they went, day after day, night after night ; one thing only resolved to do, to follow the star, and with only one thought in their hearts—to find their King ! O truly wise men ! would I were like you—for your star is my star also, the star of faith ; and your King is also my King.

At last they reach Jersualem, for it never crossed their minds that the King could have been born anywhere except in the capital of His kingdom. And he must have been born in the royal palace, of course ; so they enter the city, and ask to be taken to the king's palace. All the city is in a stir about them. A great train of camels and servants, and men in Eastern garb, with rich bales of some sort, all come to ask for the new-born king. " Where is He, for we have seen His star in the East and have come to adore him ? "

Herod hears it, and he " is troubled." If there is another king born, he must be a rival and an enemy. But the dreadful part of it is that he believes it is the fulfilment of a prophecy. He understands that it is of Christ that they are speaking, and he knows that Christ is the real King, and that He is to come; and so he calls together the chief priests and scribes and inquires of them where, according to the sacred books, Christ is to be born. And he does this, that, having found Him out, he may kill Him. That is the way of the world. The kings of the earth take counsel together "against the Lord and against His Christ" (Ps. ii. 2). They believe there is a Christ and they try to kill Him. They are doing that at the present day. Lucifer tried the same experiment in heaven. He knew there was a God and believed in Him, and made war on Him, and tried to dethrone Him; and still the world goes on playing Lucifer's game, to meet with Lucifer's reward.

The wise men hear that the King must be born at Bethlehem, and to Bethlehem they prepare to go. But, alas! when they reached Jerusalem their star had disappeared! Was it, then, all a dream, a deceit? No: shame on the thought! They have another star, another light in their hearts—the clear light of faith. The King is born in Bethlehem, so to Bethlehem they must go, and turning away from the royal city and the king's palace, they set out with their camels for the least of all the cities of the land of Juda.

It is a little city of shepherds, full just then of travellers, because everyone belonging to it had come from far and near to be enrolled. Where should they find the King in this crowd, none of whom seemed of kingly rank? But their beautiful star, which after all was no deceit, but had only hidden itself for a while, went before them, out of the city, to a cave by the wayside of the road which led from the north, a cave which had been turned into a stable or shed for beasts; and there, over that poor stable, the star stood still. There, and there only, would they find their King. " And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." No wonder! Those understand their joy who have waited long and wearily for a great blessing, which always seemed far off and which has come at last. They did not stand outside the cave and give way to bitter disappointment. " What! a stable! We thought He was going to be a great King. What is the use of giving Him our gold, and frankincense, and myrrh? It will be ridiculous. So this is what we have come all this long way to find!—a miserable shed in a wayside cave."

No, there was nothing of all this. " They rejoiced with exceeding great joy." It was the joy of believing. On earth there is no joy like that of faith. In Heaven there will be the joy of seeing and possessing, and the kings were to know something of that too. They had believed in their King, they had sought Him, now they had found Him; and they were to have the joy beyond all other joys of seeing Him face to face. So they entered into the cave, those three great chiefs, who had prepared themselves to stand in the sumptuous rooms of a royal palace; they entered the stable, and there " they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him; and, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts."

Were they content, think you, when they found the Child with Mary His Mother? Who would not be content? What more could they desire? What beauty was ever like the beauty of that Child, or that of His Virgin Mother? But the straw, the beasts, the manger, the poverty of it all? They never gave it a thought. At the sight of the Child, they simply fell down and adored. What! did they kneel in that miserable straw? Yes, knelt, and prostrated, and kissed His feet, and adored.

There is nothing more to say. The long quest of faith has come to its end. The weary feet, the hoping against hope, the long days and the longer nights—all are forgotten now. They have found Jesus and Mary, the Child and His Mother, and, prostrate at their feet, they are indeed content. And we too shall one day kneel there and find our joy in seeing and believing, for we shall see Him and shall be satisfied. We have had our long time of waiting ; but we too shall one day enter in, and faith shall give place to sight.

XXVIII. *AN ASH-WEDNESDAY CONFERENCE*

ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN

In speaking to you on this day, I can hardly do otherwise than remind you that we are beginning a season unlike any other in the year, whether as to its duties or its graces ; and entreat you not to waste it. Lost Lents are bad things. The infidel spirit of the day—by which I mean not only the spirit of open unbelievers, but that disposition of mind which, without professing rank infidelity, opposes all things holy—makes no account of sacred seasons and sacred ceremonies. Hence we should cherish them all the more. The reverence for them and esteem of them is one of the safeguards of faith. It is an essential part of the Catholic faith. What we should care to form and preserve in ourselves is the Catholic *character,*—a character as distinct as it is beautiful, and which is entirely built upon the foundation of the Catholic faith. By this Catholic character, remember, I do not in the least mean the character of a recluse or a devotee. You see some some of its very finest examples in the world and in those filling wordly positions. Take, for instance, Blessed Thomas More while he remained the Chancellor of the realm. Witness his loyalty to his sovereign, yet openly putting God first on all occasions ; his sterling integrity ; his conscientious fulfilment of all the duties of his state of life. No wonder when God called him higher, to be a confessor and martyr, he was so ready, so happy, to obey the call.

This Christian character consists in: (1) fidelity to duty—giving to all their due: to God, to others, and to ourselves; (2) freedom from human respect—readiness to confess the truth, to practise religion openly; (3) love of the poor, self-denying alms-deeds; and (4) good habits. It is wonderful how large a share in the Christian character is owing to good habits. It is quite a distinctive feature, contrasting with the fits and starts and whims and moods—good moods and bad moods, pious moods and worldly moods,—all things by turns and nothing for long,—which we see in the unformed character. I mean good habits stuck to: morning and night prayers; the regular frequentation of the Sacraments; the daily Mass. We heard only yesterday of a gentleman who regularly walked eight miles on a weekday to hear Mass. It was his habit, and he never broke it.

And what I want to impress on you is the importance of this power of habit. Habit is the repeated act, the adherence to the act, and that by way of submission to some law. A person without habits is like a ship without sails and without a rudder: it gets along somehow, but it is quite a question which way it goes. There is something in a habit which is sanctifying, because strengthening. A very small thing persevered in has more valuable results than a much greater thing done intermittently. For example, suppose this first day of Lent we propose to read every day a chapter of "The Following of Christ," or to practise some trifling definite mortification at meals, or to perform some little devotion in honour of the Sacred Passion; it will do us more good to persevere in these small resolutions than if we were once or twice, when the notion took us, to fast on bread and water.

It would do us good in this way. We could not keep up any little practice perseveringly without its often having to encounter a resistance of nature. We like to do it to-day and perhaps to-morrow; but next day, it may be, we forget; or just at the time when we should be doing it, we want, or some one else wants us, to do something else; and the effort we make over ourselves not to be put out or to turn out of the way is an effort that strengthens, and is, in fact, virtue. And its indirect effect will be to put muscle and vigour into our whole system; so that we shall be more disposed, more vigilant, to command ourselves in other ways and attend to other matters of virtue; whereas the fits-and-starts piety gains no sort of control. For the same reason, I have no hesitation in saying that, with regard to the Sacraments, the regular frequentation of them at fixed times is infinitely more precious than going more frequently but irregularly.

Good habits require an effort to form; bad habits are very easily formed, because they go with the stream. What we call bad habits is generally indulgence of some part of our unrestrained nature; idle habits, for instance, spring from the sloth of our nature, which hates trouble and cannot bring itself to face a difficulty with a strong will. For the most part, good habits call for *resistance.* On this capacity for resistance everything depends.

This is just one reason why you are checked and restrained in a thousand little things that are not sins; and that you think it so tiresome to be told constantly *not* to do certain things which spring from unrestrained nature. S. Ignatius calls them *inordinatio*, and he says this want of restraint is one of the roots of sin.

Lent is a good time to take all these imperfections in hand. We should try and do our best during these holy days for ourselves and one another. Do not undertake too much, but try to adhere steadily to a few things, with the thought of our dear Lord and the desire to please Him constantly in your hearts. Kindness to others for His sake goes straight to the Heart of Jesus.

Passion Sunday

XXIX

To-day we commemorate the Passion of Our Divine Lord; to-morrow the Most Precious Blood;[1] and on Friday the Dolours of the Blessed Virgin: all seems to point to that on which our thoughts and minds and hearts should be fixed, and to which all our meditations should tend. We are entering on Passion-tide, a season when the Church calls on us to celebrate with more solemnity and greater fervour than at any other time of the year, the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, and thus prepare ourselves for the duties and ceremonies of Holy Week.

I know that meditation on the sufferings of Christ presents great difficulties to some, who find it almost impossible to bring before their minds any representation of these mysteries to move their will, and who therefore feel little or no attraction to Meditation on the Passion. But a thought which ought to encourage us to give ourselves to it with great fervour, is, that no one can meditate with ever so little sensible devotion on our Divine Lord's sufferings, without drawing from it great gain to their own souls. It is one of those things which has the nature of a Sacramental, and therefore must convey grace to those who make use of it.

We fancy sometimes, as we read the Lives of the Saints, that it was easy enough for them to have an intense devotion to the Passion, since they were, at least many of them, favoured with such sensible graces and miraculous favours. Take, for example, Blessed James of Mevagna, from whose crucifix flowed a stream of miraculous blood, as he knelt before it, while a voice issued from it, giving him the assurance of his Salvation —How could he ever again have looked upon his crucifix without realising the love of his Divine Master in pouring out that precious Blood for the salvation of the human race? Or again, when the crucifix spoke to S. Peter Martyr in his hour of trial, and said, "And I, Peter, what had I done?"—How easy for him to draw the lesson of patience and resignation under calumny! But we forget that these and similar favours were but exterior signs of God's love and grace; and that, before the Saints received them, they had long practised devotion and love for the sufferings of Christ considered by the eye of faith; so that these graces were rather the reward of their love and fidelity than an incitement to their devotion. Look into the life of any Saint you like, and you will find an extraordinary devotion to the Passion. It was the distinguishing mark of the Saints; they would not have been Saints without it.

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[1] The feast had been transferred in that year, 1878.

But, apart from the miraculous graces vouchsafed to the chosen servants of God, something of the same kind has happened to us hundreds of times in the course of our lives. Which of us could say that the crucifix has never spoken to her?—Spoken in times of trial, of temptation, of difficulty? I will not say of calumny, but when a breath has arisen against us, and we have been tempted to maintain our dignity, and stand up for our rights and what we thought was due to us?—As we cast our eyes upon the crucifix, has it not spoken to our hearts? has it not reproached us; and said, almost in an audible voice: "I did not act thus"? Does it not teach us the same lessons it taught the Saints, only not in the same sensible way? . . . Oh,! many times in our lives the crucifix has spoken to us, and given us courage and grace which have enabled us to bear the trials that surround us. It is not necessary for us to see, and hear, and feel these things as the Saints did. We need not desire to see with our Holy Mother S. Catherine and many of the Saints the Scenes of the Passion in a sensible form in our imagination, or wish to go in spirit with the venerable Anne Catherine to the spot where our Divine Lord suffered and died; for we have all these things and more than this.

Though they were miraculous graces, they were but representations; we have the reality. Every morning at Mass, we assist, not at the representation, but at the renewal of the tremendous sacrifice on Calvary and the mystic outpouring of that Most Precious Blood. The blood which flowed from Blessed James's crucifix was only miraculous blood; but in the Mass we have that very self-same holy Blood poured out anew as on Calvary itself! His sacred Body is broken again for us, and in Holy Communion, which we receive so often, is given unto our very hearts, while our lips are dyed with His own Most Precious Blood.

In order, then, that we may celebrate the Sacred Passion with greater love and fervour than ever before during this coming fortnight, let us make a resolution together to try to assist at Mass with greater reverence and devotion, striving to attain closer union with our Lord through His Passion, and making our hearing Mass an act of special devotion to it, such as we should have had if we had been actually on Calvary with Mary, the Mother of Dolours. Let us approach with the greatest love the Sacrament of Love, that, becoming more and more closely united with Him, we may be able to share also in His sufferings.

S. Gertrude says beautifully, that, "as no man can handle flour without carrying some of it about with him, so no one can meditate devoutly and assiduously on the Passion without deriving great fruit therefrom."

Palm Sunday

XXX. *THE PROCESSION OF PALMS*

S. MATT. xxi.

THEY were drawing nigh to Jerusalem, and had come as far as Bethphage and Mount Olivet, when Jesus sent two of His disciples to go into the village hard by and loose the ass and the ass's colt, which they would find there tied, and bring them to Him.

As He stood there and waited for their return, we may reverently imagine that He looked forward to all that would come to pass so shortly in that place. To-day it was to be a triumphal entry into Jerusalem; in a few days that same Mount of Olives was to be the scene of His agony; and again, after forty days, He was to ascend thence into Heaven.

What contrasts! What a picture of our Christian course! We pass from consolation to desolation, from triumph to trial, from trial to crown. And again, what a picture of the instability and emptiness of the world! How can we trust it or care for it? Those very olive-trees that to-day are to yield their branches to be waved before Him in triumph and strewn in His way, will soon be watered in the blood which falls from Him in His agony. He knew and foresaw it all; and it was with this knowledge in His heart that He prepared for that hour of popular triumph.

The whole proceeding, as described by S. Matthew, had in it a mystery. It was to be the fulfilment of a prophecy: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke" (Isa. lxii. 11; Zach. ix. 9).

When Jesus comes as King is just the moment when He chooses to display His character in what is most unlike and opposed to the pomp of wordly sovereignty. "He cometh to thee, meek." And He shows His meekness by riding the meekest of all animals, an ass; nay, even the little foal of the ass. As generally explained, He rode first the one and then the other. Many mystical interpretations are given of this. The ass, which alone was tied and "used to the yoke," represented the chosen people of Israel; the foal, as yet free and unbroken, was the Gentile world. To the Apostles was given the mission of bringing both to Jesus, who "had need of it," that is, who called and elected both. Or, as others say, the ass represents our sins of habit, the colt our sudden impulses of passion; and Jesus must rule and dominate both.

Richard of S. Victor bids us mark the course of the procession. It begins at Bethany; it passes by the Mount of Olives; it tends to Jerusalem. That is, it begins with obedience, passes by suffering, and ends in the vision of peace. Thus it is a figure of the Christian life. Our way must be strewn with palms and flowers, the palms of victory and the flowers of virtue; whilst, amid the lofty graces of obedience and mercy, we ourselves are borne on the lowly virtue of humility.

S. Bernard also says some lovely things on the same subject. "In this procession, where crowds accompanied our Lord, some went before, and some followed, and some walked by His side. The first are those who prepare the way of the Lord to your hearts and direct your steps in the way of peace. The second are those who, conscious of their own weakness, follow devoutly in the footsteps of those who go before. But the third are those who choose the better part, adhering to His side and considering His pleasure. All are in that procession with Him, yet none see His face, neither they that go before nor who follow after; only they who keep by His side sometimes catch a glance, but not constantly or fully, so long as they are in the way. Only when they reach Jerusalem, and the procession of this life is over, will they behold Him in the Vision of Peace."

Good Friday

XXXI. *THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS*

I. Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus is the King of kings, the only real King over the whole earth. He is brought before the tribunal of Pilate as a criminal. All the powers of the world are there to sit in judgment on Him, to declare Him guilty of death, and to cry out, " Crucify Him ! "

The world—judging Jesus Christ, hearing evidence against Him, and condemning Him ! " Away with Him ! not this man, but Barabbas " (S. John xviii. 40). The world is always judging Him, rejecting Him, condemning Him, and, as far as it can, putting Him to death ; not in His own person now, but in His law, His maxims, His spirit, which they condemn and would sweep away, and in the person of His Church, which they declare the enemy of society ; so, " Away with it ! "

Have I ever sat in judgment on Jesus Christ and condemned Him ? Christ or Barabbas ? Have I ever put those two before me, and chosen Barabbas ? We do that when we sin with our eyes open and choose to sin. Then think of the kingship of Christ, and the disloyalty of so rejecting Him.

II. THE CROSS IS LAID ON JESUS

It had been before Him from the beginning. The Cross, the instrument of our salvation, therefore He loved it ; the terrible instrument of His Passion, at which His human nature shuddered. Now it is laid on Him, and He takes it up with courage. Try and enter into His sentiments as He does so ; so intensely conscious of all the pain and humiliation, with the strong firm will to endure all " for us men, and for our salvation " ; also by it to accomplish the Will of God, to expiate the sin which made war on His glory, to make reparation for all.

Sooner or later the Cross must be laid on us. We must bow our shoulders and take it up. Perhaps it is a daily, life-long cross—bodily suffering, wearing and teasing one, and hindering one from doing what one would. How shall we bear it ? Oh, if only I had grace to unite my little cross to His and my intentions to His—God's will—expiation—reparation ! And to love it as He loved His, even whilst it was crushing Him to the dust! It is possible to do this. May he give the grace!

III. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Compassion to see Him fall. He, on whom all creatures depend for their very being, He falls in weakness, whilst the soldiers jeer and hoot at Him, and no one helps Him to rise.

But we fall too. The first fall—when was it, and what? Far away, I cannot remember, but there must have been a first, and that was but the beginning; and other falls came after. Contrition for all these, for which this fall of Jesus is making satisfaction.

IV. JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

There are other sufferings than those of the body, other crosses than those of wood. There are pangs of the heart. He who loves must suffer. Never ever loved like Jesus, and so none ever suffered as He did. And in all His loves none could come near His love for His Blessed Mother. The heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary, the two perfect hearts loving one another, the perfect sympathy between them, the perfect compassion she was able to give, because she comprehended all that was in His heart. Now they meet on the way of the Cross. Meetings and partings—they make up the history of human hearts. Partings are a terrible anguish; but there is a worse, and it is giving pain to a heart we love: to see one we love suffer is worse than suffering one's self. But, if we are ourselves the cause of that suffering? And this was how it was with these two hearts. The sword that was piercing the heart of Mary, Jesus Himself had to thrust in. Then the meeting. It was more of a parting than a meeting—no word by which they could console each other; He, drawn on by the brutal soldiers, just sees His sorrowful mother for a moment in the crowd of spectators; their eyes meet—that is all. He see her tears, her anguish; then He has to pass on, thinking of that beloved face, as she is thinking of His—and its look of unutterable woe.

These pangs of the heart are worse than the nails and the spear. Life brings us our share of them; they have made up life's exceeding bitterness. At such times Jesus and Mary can understand and sympathise.

V. Simon of Cyrene

They compelled him to bear the Cross—that looks as if he had at first been unwilling. But we are led to think that the touch of the Cross, which had just been taken from the bleeding shoulders of Jesus, changed his heart, and " from a compulsory task it became a delightful burden." Here is encouragement: we all hate the cross at first when we are compelled to bear it. But it contains a hidden virtue, powerful enough to change the heart. There is nothing so transforming as suffering. A soul that has not yet suffered is only half formed. It does not know either its own strength or its own weakness. I dwell with comfort on the thought of Simon changed by the Cross into another man.

VI. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

The Face of Jesus! That Face which we shall behold when we are judged, to see which will be the unending joy of heaven; the Face in which all the beauty of God is reflected! Veronica beheld it in its anguish, and it pierced her with love and compassion. Its beauty was veiled to the eyes of His enemies; but she saw what they did not. Then an immense privilege was granted to her, not merely to see, but to touch, and, as far as might be, to console. Simon and Veronica both helped Jesus. But Veronica was the happier, for she was not " compelled "; it was her deep love and compassion that moved her. Perhaps at first she only thought of Him with a woman's compassion for a poor sufferer whom she saw being ill-treated by brutal men. Very likely it was no more than that. But Jesus in the depth of His humiliation, had in Him all His Divine Power undiminished. And, along with it, He had that tender, gracious heart, ready to reward the least service; and He gave her her reward. He left on the handkerchief the likeness of His Divine Countenance. What a gift! How she must have treasured it; an inestimable treasure in reward for a trifling service. Every day we may do Him some little service, perhaps in the person of His poor. Whatever it is, He accepts and rewards; and, if He will stamp the likeness of His Blessed Countenance, not on the handkerchief, but on our hearts, we need ask no more.

VII. Jesus Falls the Second Time

Another fall! And it must have been more painful than the first. He was weaker, and He fell on His knees, already bruised and bleeding. He suffered then for our relapses into sin and our long continuance in them. The rising was more difficult. It all speaks to us of the sorrowful past, and cries for contrition and compunction.

VIII. Jesus Consoles the Women

Thank God! there were some who wept over the sufferings of Jesus! Every heart was not hardened against Him, and He was touched with compassion, not for Himself, but for them. Suffering often makes us selfish; but it may also act the other way and intensify our pity for others. Jesus knew the terrible things that were coming on Jerusalem, and He had pity for those who had pity on Him. "Weep not for Me" (S. Luke xxiii. 28). To Veronica and Simon He gave one sort of reward. To these women He speaks, and they heard the tones of His voice. When we think of Him, I know of nothing that seems so lovely as His face and His voice. And both these we find in this way of the Cross. We shall one day see that face and hear that voice. Will it say to us, " Well done ! Enter in " ? (S. Matt. xxv. 23).

IX. JESUS FALLS THE LAST TIME

The last fall ! It must have been the most grievous of all. One can hardly bear to think of what it must have been, with none but His torturers to help Him to rise. Perhaps with that agony He won for me the grace to rise from the last fall and to fall no more. Impossible to separate the thought of His falls and of our own.

X. JESUS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Calvary is reached at last ; and then comes a new torture of body and soul blended in one. His garments, glued to His wounds by His blood, are torn off, and all bleed afresh ; and besides the pain there is the shame and confusion. We need to understand the exquisite sensitiveness of His spotless soul to sound the depths of that suffering. But He was to expiate sin in many ways and to suffer shame for those who were shameless.

We sit down and gaze at Him, the bleeding Victim prepared for the Sacrifice. He had to wait, with the cold wind blowing into His open wounds, wearily, patiently, meekly to wait, whilst the soldiers fastened the pieces of wood together and made it ready. He had to see it all and wait their pleasure. His Mother must have been there also, and she, too, must have seen it all. What was passing in her heart ? Enter into it, and read the love and oblation, *Sume et suscipe*, " Take and receive." He was saying, " Behold I come . . . to do Thy Will : O My God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart " (Ps. xxxix. 8, 9).

XI. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

He lies down on His bed of death and delivers Himself into the hands of His executioners. They do with Him as they will—stretching His limbs, increasing His sufferings. He utters not a word nor a cry. Nailed to the Cross—as though to make sure He should not escape. We hear the blows of the hammer, and we see the blood gushing forth. These are the Wounds whose print He will bear through eternity—gaping hideous Wounds, from which in His risen Body will stream forth rays of glory ; Wounds which will be the objects of love and devotion to countless hearts ; four of those five sacred Wounds which have always been so dear to England. Kiss them now. Bury in them the wounds of our own soul. They are clefts in the rock, wherein the dove makes her nest. " What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands ? " and He answers, " The wounds wherewith I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me " (Zach. xiii. 6). Between those wounds and love there is a strong mystic tie.

XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Over at last ! But after a three hours' agony. Darkness over the face of the earth, and out of the darkness coming from time to time the voice of Jesus. The singing of the Passion realises it to us best. Those seven words are all so full of love—love and suffering. His soul was plunged in desolation so deep and awful, we cannot sound it ; but all the same He had care for us. He thought of the thief, He thought of S. John, He thought of His Blessed Mother, and in them He thought of us and of me. He hangs there, " lifted up," and drawing all things to Himself. At the Elevation in the Mass, He is also " lifted up " (S. John iii. 14), that we may adore Him, and cleave to Him, and give ourselves to Him. We picture it all as passing in a profound silence, broken only by those seven words; His Mother, and S. John, and Magdalen standing below, with the Precious Blood dropping on them, unable to help Him. Three hours of woe unspeakable—the most terrible woe of all to hear Him cry in His desolation that He was abandoned! But that woe passed at the last. He commends His soul to His Father, and the thought brings us face to face with the moment of our own death. Make a preparation for that moment.

XIII. Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

All over! The last sigh has gone forth. Then a brief interval, and the fifth wound is given to the lifeless body—the Sacred Heart is opened and pours forth its fountain of blood and water. We dwell with fresh love on that fifth wound—the wounded Heart. Better to be wounded by a spear than by sorrow for our sins. Even in death He pours forth the figures of the Sacraments—the fountain of water to cleanse, of blood to feed, and nourish, and heal. Then, at last, He is taken down and laid in His mother's arms. She may hold Him there now for a little space, and gaze on Him, and count His wounds. But not for long. She has to give Him up to be buried.

Dead and buried. Some of us know what those two words are when spoken of our dear ones. And they are words which will be in the Creed of the Church for ever.

Did our Blessed Lady repeat them to herself as she was obliged to give Him up at last? And if so, how profound was her sense of anguish!

XIV. Laid in the Tomb

He is buried—the tomb is closed. A large stone is rolled to the mouth of the cave, and they all have to leave Him there—alone—alone with death and the Angels! and they go back to the city, and feel that a death has come over the whole world. For the lovers of Jesus—their life and their love is no longer in it. Then followed the silent, sorrowful Sabbath. Holy Saturday, when there is no Blessed Sacrament in the Church, tells us something about it.

Jesus is buried. And how often does He condescend to be buried in our hearts in Holy Communion as in a Sepulchre ! They laid Him in His Sepulchre with all reverence, with spices, and in the clean linen cloth, all representing the love and reverence with which we should lay Him in this other Sepulchre.

But now, thanks be to God, the suffering is over. To-morrow—very early—He will rise in glory and beauty. " Out of Sion the loveliness of His beauty " (Ps. xlix. 2). He will bear the marks of the wounds, but they will only add to His beauty. We sit by the Sepulchre, and watch and wait, that we may be the first to welcome Him.

Easter

XXXII. *THE SEA OF TIBERIAS*

" When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore."—S. John xxi.

The first apparitions of Jesus to His disciples after His Resurrection were in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and of these S. Luke speaks. S. Matthew tells us that He commanded His disciples to go into Galilee, and promised to show Himself to them there. S. John alone relates the circumstances of His appearance there in the 21st chapter of his Gospel.

The disciples seem all of them to have returned to Galilee, and not only so, but to have resumed their ordinary mode of living. Seven of them, including S. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, went, according to their custom, fishing on the Sea of Tiberias, and spent the whole night, and caught nothing. " And when morning came, Jesus stood on the shore."

The narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes needs to be read and compared with that other miracle of the like character related by S. Luke, but I am not now going to make the comparison, interesting as it is. Enough to remember, that, according to all interpreters, the first draught signified the whole Church militant, but the second draught the elect only, those who were not only taken in the net, but safely landed without the breaking of the net; one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, that is three times the number of fifty (the Jubilee number); perfect joy, and joy in God—signified by the additional three.

Setting aside all the beautiful and mystical meanings contained in the narrative under this aspect, and the heavenly banquet which awaited them, prepared by our Lord's own hands, we will consider only the seven disciples as they entered their boat and went out to their night's fishing. They had already seen their risen Lord, and that more than once; and yet it would seem that their faith was not yet perfect, or that at least their minds were in some sort confused. The Holy Ghost had not yet descended, nor did they, as yet, perfectly understand what their own mission was to be; for only at His Ascension did our Lord bid them "go and preach the Gospel to every creature" (S. Mark xvi. 15). This command had not yet been given; and, in ignorance of it, they saw nothing but a return to their former occupations. How many familiar memories did not that sea bring to their minds! And what a crowd of events had passed since last they had been borne upon its waters! Our Lord's Passion and Resurrection, short in the time they occupied, had come like a chasm between the life that had gone on before those events and the present. He had been with them then; now He was departed from them. How everything spoke of Him! On that sea-shore He had taught the multitude out of that very ship. These were the very nets which the sons of

Zebedee had been mending when He called them to follow Him. On the waters of that sea they had beheld Him walking; and it was there He had commanded the winds and the waves, saying, "Peace, be still" (S. Mark iv. 39). If places and scenes are dear to us, where we have lived, and to which we have resorted with those whom we loved and who are gone from us, what must these things have been to the disciples, and with what heavy hearts must they have returned to their boats, and their nets, and their old life—without Him!

It was a long weary night of toil, and they took nothing. A long weary night, with hard work and sad hearts, and no fruit for their labour. If we call it a picture of life, it is a sorrowful one. Yet life is a long weary night to those who look for morning. "O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day" (Ps. lxii. 2). At its very best it is a long night to those who thus long for Him, that they may come before Him to "behold His power and His glory" (Ps. lxii. 2).

And the labours that fill our hands are wearisome labours, and in themselves are empty and profitless ones too. What is trade, or study, or the ordinary worldly business and intercourse of men with one another, but empty and profitless? We toil all the night and take nothing. The night is so long, and we wish for the morning, "when the day shall break and the shadows retire" (Cant. ii. 17).

There is an image which has stamped itself on my memory with singular force. A ship left her port late in the evening and steered to the south. Gradually the white cliffs were left behind, growing dimmer and dimmer in the waning light, till at last they quite disappeared, and we were out of sight of land. The sea was all around us, wide and limitless. So night fell, and through the long night hours we went on ploughing through the darkness. Very early in the morning, before sunrise, we were on deck, and still nothing but sea;

presently, however, on the southern horizon appeared a faint misty line, which grew more distinct as we approached it. It was the shore of that new, unknown country whither we were bound. We had left our own country far behind us, and here was an unknown shore drawing on us, then growing clearer, until, as the sun rose, we were in the harbour of Dieppe; and there, close to the landing-place, was a great crucifix and some women kneeling at its foot.

Often since then I have called to mind that fading away of the old land of my childhood, the open sea, and the sense through the night hours of estrangement and separation; then that early misty dawn and the dim view of the new shore to which we were hastening. Is not this life, and death, and the new life, the new home that is waiting for us after death? And is it not solemn to think of setting foot on that unknown shore, to which every stroke of the wheel is bringing us nearer? Nearer and nearer as the years pass swiftly by, till we come to say, "It may be to-morrow or to-day;" and, whenever it be, this we know, that it must be close at hand. And at last the morning comes, and Jesus is standing on the shore! So it was with the disciples; the long night with its cold and its darkness passed at last, and in the dim morning light, the light of an April Easter morning, they neared the shore. There they beheld, standing and waiting for them, a white figure shining through the misty light, and seeming as though It communicated to it something of glory and beauty, besides the beauty of the sunrising. The Easter Hymn just touches on this lovely passage, and one would say that the hand that wrote it must have written it at sunrise. After saying that Our Lord had commanded them to go into Galilee and promised that they should see Him there, it goes on to say that the disciples, hearing this, went quickly to Galilee, that they might behold the much-loved face of the Lord. Then follows the exquisite verse which tells us how the world was bathed in the glorious rays of a Paschal morning, when the Apostles once more beheld the form of Jesus—

Claro Paschali gaudio
Sol mundo nitet radio,
Cum Christum jam Apostoli
Visu cernunt corporeo.[1]

Beautiful words, but they are hardly more so than those in which the Gospel sets the scene before us: " When the morning came, Jesus stood on the shore."

At first they did not recognise Him: " they knew not that it was Jesus." They had come to Galilee to meet Him, but they had not expected to meet Him here.

Then came His voice speaking to them: " Children, have you any meat? . . . Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find." It was enough. There came back the memory of the first miraculous draught of fishes; and the loving heart of S. John at once recognised the voice and the form of his Master. He said to Peter, " It is the Lord." Peter, when he knew it was the Lord, did not wait till the ship had reached the land. The net had been cast, and the others were busy securing the " multitude of fishes "; but Peter threw himself at once into the sea that he might land the sooner at the feet of his beloved Master. " They were not far from the land," and the others followed, " dragging the net with the fishes."

Oh, what a joyful meeting! The morning brightness was full, not merely of glory, but of joy: " *Claro Paschali gaudio;*" and it was, as we know, a mysterious figure of the final meeting of Jesus and His elect, when, standing on the eternal shore, He welcomes them as they come to Him from the temptations and tossing sea of this world, and invites them to the never-ending banquet, and admits them into the joy of their Lord.

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[1] Dominican Breviary—Paschal Hymn for Lauds.

Year after year we read this Gospel on the Wednesday in Easter Week. The suffering of Holy Week is over, and the clear Paschal sun is shining in our cloisters and in our hearts. I cannot think that the Paschal time can ever fail to bring us joy, or that we should ever get to feel out of harmony with its brightness. But, as the years go by, the times and seasons of the Church and her beautiful Offices, and these delicious Hymns and Gospels, bring with them thoughts of so many who once shared these things with us and now are gone ! Who was it who had such a special love to the sound of the bell on Holy Saturday, and the blessing of the Paschal candle ? Who was it who always reserved for me her first Paschal greeting ? And who was it to whom this very Gospel was so dear, and who loved S. Peter so much for his impetuous plunge into the sea, that he might reach his Lord the sooner ?

They were all dear loving hearts, who have passed away, " and left me sitting alone." We who remain are still out at sea, but the dawn is at hand. Every moment we are nearing the land, and soon the faint streak of that new country will appear on the horizon. Soon the morning will come, and the shadows will flee away. Then we shall see Jesus standing on the shore, waiting to bid us welcome. The night is far spent and the day is at hand. We shall see Him then in the morning light of the Resurrection, and we shall know that it is the Lord. And S. Paul tells us that those who rest with Him, He will surely " bring with Him." They, too, will surely be waiting there to receive us and to share our joy. Our Paschal greetings will be greetings for Eternity, " and so we shall be always with the Lord " (1 Thess. iv. 16).

Corpus Christi

XXXIII. *REFLECTIONS ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT*

When we look at the Blessed Sacrament, we look on the face of Jesus. Yet to see Him face to face will be Heaven. Mary must have looked at Him as He lay in the manger. So did the shepherds: "Let us go and see" (S. Luke ii. 15). Simeon looked at Him and said, "Mine eyes have beheld Thy Salvation" (S. Luke ii. 30). The Baptist showed Him to the people and desired them to look on Him: "Behold the Lamb of God" (S. John i. 29).

Nathaniel wondered if any good thing could come out of Nazareth. Phillip said, "Come and see" (S. John i. 46). Another time men came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (S. John xii. 21). In the Transfiguration the aspect of His countenance became changed and shining, "and His garments white as snow" (S. Matt. xvii. 2); the three disciples beheld His glory, they looked at it. Finally, men looked on Him on the Cross. "They have looked and stared upon Me" (Ps. xxi. 18). And He likened Himself to the brazen serpent which cured all who looked at it.

The Blessed Sacrament is the sweetness of God: "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. xxxiii. 9). This sweetness He has hidden in the Tabernacle. As bees hide away their honey in hives and honeycombs, so He hides His sweetness in the Blessed Sacrament and stores it up for us in our Tabernacles. "Oh! how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for those who fear Thee" ("Imitation," iv. ch. xiv. 1).

But not only is the sweetness of God there, but those also who would taste it must seek for it in the Blessed Sacrament. If they would find it, they must knock at the door of the Tabernacle. Then they desire to abide there for ever: "One thing I have asked of the Lord . . .

to dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. xxvi. 4). He hears their prayers and hides them in His Tabernacle. "In the evil day He hath protected me in the secret place of His Tabernacle" (Ps. xxvi. 5). "Thou shalt hide them in Thy Tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues" (Ps. xxx. 21). Such as these live in the world; but their hearts are in the Tabernacle. They have a food to eat, and they taste a sweetness the world knows not of. S. Catherine understood this when she exclaimed, "Jesus, Sweetness! Jesus, Love!"

But Jesus has two Tabernacles, one on the Altar and one in our hearts. In both He hides Himself, in both He stores a hidden sweetness. Sometimes it is He who comes to the door of our hearts and says, "Hide Me in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues." Then it is we who protect Him in the Sacrament of His Love, hiding Him in the secret of our hearts. Oh, how lovely are all these tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts! How beautiful the soul which He has made His Temple, "the place where His glory dwelleth" (Ps. xxv. 8). How good it is for us to adhere to God, to keep close to Him in the hidden place of His Tabernacle, to hide under the covert of His wings, to enter into the very cleft of the stony rock and taste the honey that lies concealed there and the hidden manna! S. Catherine had once in some supernatural manner tasted a horrible savour, which she knew to be the pestilential savour of the sins of men. She turned to the Eternal Father and said, "Have mercy on me, Eternal Father, and show me the place where I and Thy other servants may find repose, for verily it seems as if we could not find a place of refuge for our souls, where the leprosy of sin may not touch them;" and He replied, "Daughter, your repose must be to seek My glory; and the place of refuge where you must abide is the cavern of the wounded side of Christ My Son. Enter there and you will taste the sweetness of love, for in that open Heart you will find Charity." Then she communicated, and the detestable savour of sin was exchanged for a sensible sweetness, which remained in her mouth for many days. The Blessed Sacrament is the Bread of Life. Only God has true life. Our life is not the same thing, because we have not life of ourselves.

But the Blessed Sacrament is God ; therefore, it contains the life of God—all His power, wisdom, goodness ; His creative, sustaining, loving power of life, all shut up in that little, white, silent, motionless Host.

But the Blessed Sacrament is also the Sacred Humanity. It contains then, also, the human life of Jesus. Of that human life the Sacred Heart is the centre. What is that living human Heart doing in the Sacred Host ? It is worshipping God and loving man perfectly.

What we have then to do is to unite ourselves to the dispositions of the Sacred Heart in the Holy Eucharist, chiefly—

Its profound adoration.
Its love of God.
Its love of man.
Its desires.
Its reparations.
Its profound peace.
Its resignation, and union of will with the will of God.
Its sorrow for sin.
Its joy in the glory of God.
Its zeal for souls.
Its love of Mary.
Its love of Holy Church.

And all this the life of God and the life of the Sacred Humanity, with all which that life implies, we receive on our tongues, into our hearts, and carry about with us, and incorporate with our own life at each Communion. Then He becomes our life.

As He lives by the Father, so He has given us to live by Him : " In Him was life, and the life was the light of men " (S. John i. 4).

"I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (S. John x. 10).

"He that eateth Me shall live by Me" (S. John vi. 58).

It seems to me we do not think sufficiently often of the Blessed Sacrament as living.

"My eyes and My heart," He said, speaking of the old Temple, "shall be there" (3 Kings ix. 3).

Much more of a Christian altar: His eyes and His heart are there—His eyes to see us, and His heart to live for us and to love us. Our eyes and our hearts should be there to meet His.

We are afraid of and restrain the perfect correspondence of heart with heart in the case of creatures. But, between us and the Sacred Heart, and between them alone, the correspondence may be without fear, without limitation. Our union is so complete that it is an absolute fusion of life. We are grafted into Him, grafted into His life. As the sap of the vine (it is His own simile) flows to the branches and gives them life, so are we grafted into Him, and living by His life. "Abide in Me, and I in you" (S. John xv. 4). What can express more absolute fusion than those words?

The Blessed Sacrament is the sun of our lives. How like a sun it looks when it is exposed—round, white, lightsome. And it is the true sun. Think what the sun does and is: without it there would be no light, no warmth, no life, no colour, no beauty.

Light is the grand figure of grace. It is by grace that we are what we are; all our spiritual beauty is not our own—it is the effect of Divine Grace.

Just as it is the ray of light which paints the green grass and the crimson rose, and the white lily, which without it would all be black and shapeless to the eye, so our souls without grace are destitute of all spiritual beauty. All we have is not of ourselves; "it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

But whence does that grace flow? Who is the Author of grace?

"Grace and truth," says S. John, "came by Jesus Christ" (S. John i. 17). It is His special kingdom.

So then, as all beauty of form and colour are derived from the ray of light, so all the varieties of sanctity (the effects of grace) stream out from Jesus Christ as from the sun of the spiritual world. Grace is the ray; but the sun whence that ray pours is Himself.

The Blessed Sacrament then is the source of all grace. As we look at it exposed, we think we see those Divine rays streaming out in all directions, on all hearts, into all recesses, enlightening, purifying, consoling, warming, and giving life. Wherever the rays fall they create beauty, and a beauty which is the reflection of His beauty, the beauty of God—"The firmament on high is His beauty the beauty of heaven with its glorious show." And the beauty of the spiritual heaven with its countless stars of Saints, "All is His beauty with its glorious show," and the vivifying rays that make it all, proceed from the Sacred Host which is enthroned on the Altar.

I like to look at the monstrance, and think this is what is meant by its golden rays.

XXXIV. *THE SECRET OF THE SACRED HEART*

At this time our minds are all, more or less, occupied with the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which the Church presents to our contemplation, especially as connected with the Blessed Sacrament. And it seems to me a little reflection on our own hearts, their nature and their capabilities, would be a help to us in meditating on the Sacred Heart of our Blessed Lord. And for this reason. It is marvellous, if we reflect ever so little on it,—first, what immense capabilities there are in the human heart; and, secondly, how very little we know about it. Of all mysteries, perhaps there is none of which we know so little as of that we bear within us

By the heart, of course, is meant all our interior life, principally our will and affections. Every act must spring from the heart—*i.e.*, either from our will or our affections. Life is not made up merely of intellectual thoughts. Living is acting; and by an act is meant not the thought only, but the deed proceeding from the impulse of the will or affections. Holy Scripture, which tells us more than anything else about our heart, in countless passages intimates at the same time how little we know of it, and how immense are its capacities. It calls it a deep. Who shall search its depths? "The Lord hath known the depth of the sea and the human heart,"—classing them together as two great abysses unfathomable save by God alone.

How little do we know of its capacity for sorrow till some great grief has overwhelmed us! How little we can guess the extent of suffering we are capable of enduring! And it is the same with joy. Who is there that remembers the first touch he ever felt of sensible devotion, were it ever so slight and imperfect, and does not recall the feeling of some new sense being awakened, of the existence of which he had not even dreamed? Who can tell how many of these capabilities are lying dormant within us, perhaps only to be aroused in another world to increase the joys of heaven?

The vehemence of our passion startles us at times, when roused by some unexpected cause. We are amazed at our capabilities of love or joy or sorrow; not to speak of all the worst passions of the human race, of which perhaps we know nothing, but of which we doubtless have the seeds in our hearts. Who, then, will venture to say that he knows his own heart?

It seems to me that in thus reflecting a little on the unexplored depths of our own hearts we come to have a better idea of what the capacities of the Heart of Jesus must be. Not, of course, that we can compare our hearts to His, which is an infinity; but still our hearts are also abysses, and we shall understand better the meaning of those words, "Abyss calleth on abyss." Above all we know, as the Church teaches, that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an unfathomable abyss of love for the whole human race. If our feeble capacities for love cannot be sounded, who shall measure His.

In every human heart there is, more or less, a craving for affection and sympathy; there is a void which must be filled; and while this want is unsatisfied, there is unceasing restlessness and disquietude. . . . It is not a beautiful thought, but a real fact—which we should strive to embody in our daily lives—that Our Lord has given us His human Heart to be the object of our affections. Let our hearts be *filled* with the love of that Sacred Heart; immense as they are, It is greater still. If that infinite abyss of love cannot fill them, what else will satisfy them? "Our hearts," says the great S. Augustine, "were made for God; and they can never find peace or rest until they rest in Him, above all created things." The experience of our daily lives proves the truth of these sublime words.

In the writings of our holy mother, S. Catherine, we find an expression which is, as we may say, *hers*; and, as far as I know, has not been made use of by any other writer on the subject. It is the "Secret of Our Lord's Heart." The vision is historically related in the supplement of her life: how Christ showed her His open side, and how the light that poured from it filled all the church where she was praying. And in her writings she relates how God one day reminded her of the vision, and of the words she addressed to the Incarnate Truth. "O Immaculate Lamb," she asked, "*wherefore* didst Thou will that Thy Heart should be thus pierced and laid open?" And our Blessed Lord answered that there were many reasons, but *chiefly* that His friends should see the secret of His Heart. The depth of contemplation opened out in these words is boundless.

It is the peculiarity of every human heart that it has its secret. We speak of our anxieties, our faults, our thoughts, to many; but the secret of our feelings is revealed only to those who enjoy our most intimate confidence. So Our Lord's Heart, which, in Its nature, dispositions, and affections, is so truly a human heart of like nature with our own, has Its secret; and S. Catherine tells us what that secret is. In a vision which she calls the Bridge, she describes three degrees by which the soul attains to perfect charity: the first, the pierced feet; the second, the open side; "and *there*," she says, "shall be revealed the secret of the Heart, which is the third and last degree of consummate charity." The secret, then, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is His infinite love for man; and as there is no expression for it intelligible to us, He therefore invites His friends to *see* the secret of His Heart. The Passion is, of course, the most complete expression of the love of God. Yet those sufferings, infinite as they were in regard to the Person who suffered, were finite with regard to their duration; so that even they were not enough to express a love that was infinite.

And the mystical and supernatural favours so often received by contemplative saints, whatever else they meant, certainly meant this: that there were moments in their lives when their hearts were completely changed by the action of the infinite love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This change of heart, quite apart from the exterior and mystical signs (which, of course, are entirely beyond our sphere), we all of us daily ask in the verse, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" We are all of us conscious of something in our hearts requiring this change. We go sighing and longing all the day long because of something which resists efforts, which seems to resist prayer, but which will not resist the action of the Heart of Jesus. The love of God for man was shown forth towards the whole world in the sufferings and death of the Cross. But something more—a further expression is shown to His friends when He invites them to see the secret of His Heart.

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, make our hearts like unto Thine.

XXXV. *THOUGHTS ON THE ROSARY*

THE Rosary contains within itself all devotions, because it is the compendium of the Incarnation, from which all devotions in the Church take their rise. Let the special attraction of any one be what it may, he will surely find it in the Holy Rosary. Take the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament,—it is there in its very fountain; the devotion to the Passion,—there it is; the devotion to our Blessed Lady,—we find her there.

Do we desire to prepare for Mass? There, in the grand central mystery of the Crucifixion, is the Holy Sacrifice begun. Do we wish to prepare for death? What better preparation can we make than by those oft-repeated words, by which, contemplating Our Lord's death, we invoke the help of His Blessed Mother at our own? We may without profanity say of the Rosary what is said of the Blessed Sacrament: that it has in it all manner of sweetness. I say *without profanity*, because it is the same Lord and God incarnate whom we find in both. But, beside all this, there is a most marvellous power in the contemplation of Our Lord's life as an unbroken whole, which only those who have accustomed themselves to the recitation of the entire Rosary fully comprehend.

Meditation on Our Lord's life is the very essence of Christian life; it is meditation *par excellence*. How ever high we may be in contemplation, as St. Teresa says, we shall never get beyond that. It would be a very shallow view to take of it if we looked on it only as we view meditation on the lives of the saints; though indeed it is the life of the Saint of saints. But it is much more than this; for His life is in reality our life, and meditation on His life and death is, so to speak, a kind of sacramental participation in them.

It is a wonderful thought when we see before us a hundred or a thousand persons, and remember that there are a hundred or a thousand lives being led by all those individual human souls. *We* are apt, in thought, to make distinctions—to think of one soul as more important than another. Probably in the eyes of God all are of equal importance; in one sense we know that they are so. But all these distinct human lives, with all their separate thoughts and joys and sorrows, are comprehended in the life of our Blessed Lord.

As a great, sympathizing heart is able to take in all, and sympathize with all who approach it, so in His Heart, as in an immense ocean, all our lives lie reflected. He has condescended in the most real way to associate Himself with these joys and sorrows, and to make Himself one with them. In the Rosary He deigns to call that time we are all accustomed to look back upon as the happiest of our lives—the years of our childhood—as the time of His Joyful Mysteries. To most of us the peculiar charm and perfume of that happy period was the love and influence of a mother; and so He shows His sympathy with this most cherished of our memories by revealing Himself in what we may call His domestic relations—as a little child in His humble home at Nazareth, and under the care of His Mother.

But He did not remain there; neither can *we* remain there. No soul can pass from birth to death without its passion; suffering is sure to come in some way, interior or exterior—in the body or in the soul. And here again He meets us. Whatever our agony may be, whether it be the struggle with our own nature or our own affections, trial from within or trial from without, He has gone through it all, that He may give us in our hour of need the word of consolation that *in* the agony strength comes. "And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And, being in an agony, He prayed the longer." Strength to go through courageously all that has to be gone through; strength to take up the cross and carry it; to endure the crucifixion, and remain crucified till the work of God is done. But He does not leave us even there. When we have patiently suffered with Him, He will have us rise with Him to a new life. He will, as it were, give us an ascension by an increasing assimilation of our thoughts and lives with those of the blessed in heaven.

And, then, in the great central mystery, the continual outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we reach, as it were, a standing-point of the soul, beyond which nothing remains but to die. When we have joined ourselves to God we have found rest,—a rest which the world cannot give us. And then what matters it if our life be ten, twenty, fifty years longer? They are but as the two little decades of the Rosary still left in our hands. The Rosary itself seems to teach us that there is nothing more; for the last two mysteries are but the completion of the rest.

Yet not even in death does our most loving Lord leave us. He takes us up to the gates of Paradise and shows us the half-open door, and Himself waiting with a beautiful crown for us. It sometimes seems impossible to believe, knowing as we do our own sins and miseries and wretchedness, that that beautiful crown ever can be ours. Yet this is the promised end; our Rosary lands and leaves us with God.

No one who uses only the chaplet, and never takes the Rosary as one perfect whole, can understand the wonderful light which comes through the contemplation of the whole life of Our Lord, or how it illustrates His own promise—that if we have faithfully suffered with Him upon earth, He will make us share His glory in heaven.

VI. NOTES OF PRIVATE MEDITATIONS

[THE set of short meditations that follow are from Mother Francis Raphael's private manuscript book, which she used for her daily prayer.

They are printed in the order in which they were written, as showing the spiritual growth of her soul.]

SEEKING JESUS

"Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth." — S. JOHN xviii.

1ST PRELUDE. Place Jesus before you as your End.

2ND PRELUDE. Ask grace to understand what it is truly to seek Him.

POINT I. Our Lord asked this question of the Jews sent to apprehend Him. What would be our reply if He asked it of us? Could we truly answer, "Jesus of Nazareth"?

What is it to seek anything? We make the finding of it, for the time being, our one object. We give it all our thoughts and attention. We seek diligently till we find it, even if it be not more than a needle or a groat. If we dropped our purse out walking, we should turn back, and look at every step. We should be anxious, careful, diligent.

POINT II. What is it "to seek Jesus"? Not a phrase, but a reality. It is, first, to seek eternal life. To seek to love Him. To seek to preserve His grace and His presence in the soul. To seek to please Him.

And secondly, it is to seek Him in prayer, in recollection. Now, if any one asked you, "Whom seek you?" could you honestly answer, "Jesus of Nazareth"? Is He your first concern—the thought uppermost in your heart—the one object of your life and of your day's work—the one thing always present to your mind?

Colloquy. My Jesus, Thou hast said, "Seek and ye shall find." Teach me thus to seek Thee, that I may find Thee, and never lose Thee more!

Resolution. To make Him my one object in life—my God and my all!

"Seek ye My Face. Thy Face, O Lord, will I seek!"

HOLY MASS

1st Prelude. Thank God for so many opportunities of hearing Mass.

2nd Prelude. Pray to hear it better.

Point I. What is the Mass?

The sacrifice of God, by God, to God; beyond human power ever to have devised or executed. Wholly Divine; the greatest thing in existence, or possible to exist.

Point II. What takes place in the Mass?

Christ Himself prays and satisfies for us. It is the prayer of Christ, and is of more worth, and procures God more glory, than all the worship of all saints and angels, or of our Blessed Lady herself. Do I believe this? I do firmly. Miserable as I am, when I hear Mass I am giving God an infinite worship.

I worship God, I thank Him, I satisfy, I impetrate all blessings; and in the Mass I do this perfectly, because Jesus Himself does it for me. Not Mary, not my angel-guardian, not my patron saint, but Jesus Christ our Lord!

Conclusion. What kind of privilege is it to hear ONE MASS, and hear Mass daily?

Oh, if a time should ever come when I can no longer hear Mass, how I should regret having ever heard one without attention and devotion!

TIME

1ST PRELUDE. Lord, let me know the number of my days.

2ND PRELUDE. " One day telleth another."

POINT I. Time: Eternity! How fast time is flying into eternity! I cannot stop it. To-day I am nearer than yesterday. A day nearer, and what may not hang on a conscious day! I know its value, I feel its rapid whirl. How am I using it? Can I say I take as much care of it as I would of a sixpenny piece?

POINT II. Redeeming the time. That is, buying back that which I have lost. Imagine myself on my death-bed, conscious, knowing that the day of work is over, and remembering how I have squandered days and years in the past. Oh, for only *one* day of health, opportunity, duty, time!

POINT III. Well, I am *not* on my death-bed, I am alive, able to work and think and do. Lord, give me grace to redeem the time that remains, and not lose another conscious second.

CONCLUSION. " I must work . . . whilst it is day" (S. John ix. 4).

THE SERVICE OF GOD

Place God before you on His Throne, as King and Master.
" I am Thine, save me!"—Ps. cxviii. 94.

1ST POINT. We are bound to serve God, because we belong to Him. Penetrate this means. We have no independence. God is our Master. Every moment, every faculty, every act belongs to Him of right indisputable. Without Him we cannot breathe. All is His gift in nature and in grace; therefore to be returned to Him.

2ND POINT. This service is our freedom. The greatest of all dignities. Draw out in meditation what it would come to practically if we perfectly served God.

3RD POINT. Yet, God serves us in nature and in grace. In the Incarnation, in the Sacraments. We belong to God, yet He condescends to belong to us !

COLLOQUY. How have I neglected the service of God ; claimed by my own independence ; rebelled, wasted time, wasted the goods of my master ! I am a slothful and negligent servant ! But no more ; henceforth I will serve Him faithfully as the good and faithful servant.

RESOLUTION. Give every moment and every faculty to God, my Master.

HOPE

" My soul, hope thou in God, for from Him is thy salvation." —Ps. xli.

1ST PRELUDE. Look at the end.

2ND PRELUDE. An act of hope.

1ST POINT. Do I hope ? I must hope or I cannot be saved. But it is a mystery. I cannot hope in myself. Think of the past—either really bad or wasted ; whatever was good, spoiled. Think of the present—so empty, so fitful. Resolutions ; but the accomplishment so difficult. The future. How can I expect it to be better than the past ? And yet I must hope.

2nd POINT. I do hope. Because I hope in God, and not in myself. Because He is so good and I am so bad. Because He has always been so patient, indulgent, merciful, and so I hope and believe He will be so still. Because, bad as I am, I am His, and He is mine—my God. Because, wretched as I am, I desire nothing but Himself.

3rd POINT. I hope also, because I hope in Our Lady. *Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra*—She is the mother of the miserable. I am most miserable, so she is my Mother.

COLLOQUY. O my God ! I will hope in Thee, because Thou art my salvation. I hope in Thee, and not in myself. I despair of myself ; I will not despair of Thee.

RESOLUTION. An act of intense hope to be made every day.

REFORM OF LIFE

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—ACTS ix. 6.
O, Lord give me light! Give me a good will!

1st POINT. I want to renew my life—but how? What would God have of me? What can I do?

What is my life made up of?

Rising, morning oblation, Divine Office, meditation, Mass, Communion, resolutions for day.

Then, work offered to God, and done carefully; punctuality, intercourse with others, interspersed with acts of presence of God; intention for His glory, contrition, prayer for perseverance. Guard of tongue, charity, guard of thoughts, recreation. Well, supposing it is done; it is so little, so unfervent, so much forgotten.

2ND POINT. How can it be made better? What wouldst Thou have me to do? Not in quantity, but quality. Intensity, regularity, recollection, earnestness, and, above all, resistance to nature.

COLLOQUY. What Thou wouldst have of me. Not what I would myself.

Give what Thou commandest; strengthen my deplorable weakness.

RESOLUTION. It must be a daily renewal.

PERSEVERING PRAYER

"Deus, Deus meus!"—Ps. lxii. 1.

1st PRELUDE. Place yourself as in a dry desert: you have lost your way—no path, no water.

2nd PRELUDE. Your only hope—to cry for help.

1. DEUS! Only one to whom I can cry. If He does not help me, I am lost indeed. No path, no way of escape. No one near—all alone—but—alone with God. He can hear; He can help.

DEUS! He is God. He is all-powerful. He can do all things. But will He? I have been so wilful, so negligent; I have wandered out of the way through my own fault. Perhaps He will leave me here, as I am, to perish. No, not if I go on crying, DEUS, DEUS MEUS, for He is my own God!

2. DEUS MEUS. He has given Himself to me in Jesus Christ. He made me. I am a sheep of His pasture. He will come into the desert to look for me. He is looking for me. Therefore, I cry, He is sure to hear me, and come and deliver me. O *Deus, Deus meus!* come, and come quickly!

3. He does not come at once. He tarries, Has He forgotten me, or given me up? I do not know. All I know is that I must go on crying. But the desert is so dry and parching—nothing refreshing in it. Thank God for that! So much the more do I thirst for God. I cannot live without Him. Though He tarry, yet will I wait for Him. Sooner or later He will hear me.

Deus, Deus meus.

SLOTH

"They all slumbered and slept."—S. MATT. XXV. 5.

See the Bridegroom on the road; the ten virgins asleep: they are not waiting.

O Lord, rouse me! is it too late?

1. Fast asleep, and Christ at hand. I, not waiting, not ready; fast asleep, lazy; knowing how much is at stake, knowing that I ought to be serving Him with all my mind and all my strength, but—too much trouble! Too much trouble to pray, to drive away distractions, to mortify nature. No particular inclination to sin—wishing in a way to belong to God—if only it did not take so much trouble to be a saint!

That is a fair statement of some souls—perhaps of mine. I see, I know, I am reminded, but I feel so drowsy, and therefore I slumber and sleep.

2. What is to rouse me? Is it fear? The Bridegroom at hand, and it may be too late—the door may be shut.

Is it love? The Bridegroom may enter, and I may be shut out, and so lose Him for ever! Oh, pierce my flesh with Thy fear, kindle my heart with Thy love. It is not yet too late.

HYPOCRISY

"Woe unto you, hypocrites."—S. MATT. xxiii.

I. Consider how Jesus Christ hates hypocrites.

II. Ask light to see yourself.

1. There was nothing our Lord hated like hypocrisy. He denounced it severely, and said "Woe" to it.

Am I ever a hypocrite?

Consider if you always act alone as you would do with the eyes of others on you. Do you hurry over Office if said alone?

Do you ever go to the Sacraments through human respect?

Do you ever rest content with seeming instead of being?

In so far as it is so, you are a hypocrite, and all so done is dust and ashes.

2. The works done for God must be good all through—at any rate, they must be true all through.

All else is rejected. All! O Lord! make me true.

"DEUS EST PORTIO MEA"

Ps. lxxii. 26.

I. Ask light to understand.

II. See God as a Father dividing to His children their portions.

1. What is a "portion"? That which is assigned to me for my use. A daughter who marries is given her portion. A religious in the refectory receives his portion. The prodigal son claimed his portion.

It is something I have a certain right to. If I do not get it, I am disinherited. What is my portion in this life? We cannot say we have a right to health, or riches, or success or enjoyment. But in a certain sense we have a right to God—1st, because He made us for Himself; 2nd, because He has given us His only Son. It is all of pure grace. Still, once admitted by Baptism into the kingdom of grace, we have a right to God. He is our portion.

2. He is our only portion, the only thing in the world worth securing, worth caring for. Not the purse that holds the dower, though it be of velvet, nor the plate on the table, although of gold. All is dust and ashes, except God Himself. Riches, honours, pleasures—all are rubbish, nothing of any value but God.

3. He is our portion in the next world. "I myself am thy exceeding great reward." No heaven without Him. Golden streets, emerald throne, waters of life—all are nothing. Not even the company of the Angels and Saints without Him. Hell is to lose Him, Heaven to possess Him—all else is nothing.

COLLOQUY. O my God! I must not lose Thee—lose my portion. I desire Thee, and Thee alone! All else is nothing. God alone suffices. DEUS EST PORTIO MEA!

Let me see Him, have Him, possess Him for ever, and I shall be satisfied!

GOD'S EXCEEDING MERCY

"God (who is rich in mercy) for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ."—EPH. ii. 5.

1st PRELUDE. We lying dead. Our Lord raising us to life.

2nd PRELUDE. O Lord, let me understand the greatness of Thy love!

I. We were dead in sin: certainly not objects of love. If we had died so, we must have been lost, and this would have been strict justice. But even in our sins God loved us. He could not let justice have its way; He could not leave us there, lying dead. He would raise us to life.

II. Why? Only because " He is rich in mercy." It is not said, " He is rich in justice." If He had only looked to justice we should be in hell; but rich—that is abounding—in mercy, and the Apostle gives mercy as the origin of the charity of God towards us. He does not say, " Who is rich in charity, for His exceeding mercy hath quickened us," but the other way. Mercy makes Him conceive love for us, and love makes Him exercise mercy. Nowhere is God called rich in justice; we read of the riches of His longanimity, the riches of His grace, the riches of His glory, the riches of His wisdom, but not of His justice.

III. Out of this rich mercy there proceeds a charity so great that the Apostle calls it " exceeding," *i.e.*, too great, exceeding all measure, and, if we may say so, all reason; exceeding our merits; exceeding anything we can understand; exceeding what amongst men would be thought consistent, reasonable, suitable to His dignity. So the father of the prodigal exceeded in mercy, when he not only forgave him, but went out to meet him, and clothed him in the best robe.

IV. Observe, we do not merely get forgiveness, as a criminal might, who is pardoned on the scaffold, but we get love, and exceeding love. And to prove it, He does not merely raise us to life again, but quickens us in Christ. That is, we are saved by the sufferings, the shame, the wounds, the death of Him who loves us. He is not content, as a king might be, to sign our pardon; He goes out on the scaffold and dies in our place.

COLLOQUY. O my God, would that I could be rich in love, would that I could exceed in charity towards Thee! But that can never be, because I can never love Thee enough, even if I were to die daily. Still I will remember that the measure of loving God is to love Him without measure. Let this be the measure of my love of Thee!

JESUS CHRIST, THE MERCY OF GOD

Contemplate Jesus as the Lamb.
O Lord, show me Thy mercy !

1. In many passages of Scripture it is certain that the Promised Redeemer Himself is meant by the word "mercy."

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy" (Ps. l.).

"Show us Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation" (Ps. lxxxiv.).

"When Thou art angry, then wilt Thou remember mercy" (Hab. iii 2).

The thought of Jesus Christ appeases God when we offend Him. So the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is ever being interposed between His strict justice and our miserable souls. Jesus Christ is the High Priest, standing between the living and the dead.

2. We read of "the tender mercy" of God, because there is none so tender as Jesus Christ to sinners. Was He not tender to the woman taken in sin, tender to S. Mary Magdalen, tender to S. Peter ? Has He not been tender to me ? This is what links contrition with love. We cannot think of our sins and God's pardon without being overwhelmed by the tenderness of His love.

Compunction is full of love. Cherish the thought, so sweet and so powerful.

3. Mercy, then, is not a dead formal thing, like a parchment deed. It is Jesus Christ Himself.

LOOKING TO GOD

"My eyes are ever towards the Lord ; for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare."—Ps. xxiv. 15.

See the earth covered over with snares.

1. How am I to avoid them ? (1) By looking carefully how I step. (2) By looking to God.

Here are two classes of souls who wish to avoid sin.

Some keep their eyes fixed on themselves. They examine themselves; they try and perfect themselves by rule and compass. But somehow they are not at peace. They are anxious; they are dry, and hard, and cold; they want love.

The others keep their eyes fixed on God. Thus they see directly what pleases and what displeases Him. They think a great deal more of that than of finishing off their perfection. They trust Him, not themselves, for deliverance.

The first class is in danger of spiritual pride. The second is all love and humility.

2. What is the secret of prayer and recollection? The habit of looking to God. Of resignation? The same, because then you take all things from Him and His hands. Of pure intention? *Propter te.* Of spiritual progress? You reflect the likeness of Him on whom you are always gazing. Of joy and confidence? You are for ever seeing God, so that it is impossible to be sad and gloomy.

COLLOQUY O my God, I lift up mine eyes to Thee, from whom cometh my salvation. I look up to Thee; do Thou look down on me. Look in mercy; look in love. Turn on my soul those merciful eyes, and deliver me!

PURITY OF INTENTION

1. Take your aim.
2. O my God, teach me how to make it all for Thee!

I. By direction. Here is the aim—a few moments' deliberation. Help yourself by thinking how great a privilege it is to be able to give God anything, to do anything to please Him. Before office—direct it—to please God, to praise Him, to make up for past carelessness. Do it intensely, because intense acts redeem so much. Then again, do yourself violence in excluding distractions—that will be penance; or by way of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Look at the upright palm-tree, going straight to God.

II. ENLARGE. Wish you could do more; expand your desires.

O my God, if I could love Thee better—perfectly! If I could add to Thy beatitude! If I could prevent one sin, or make amends to Thy glory, or make up for my wasted life! If I could die of love! If I could spend one moment wholly for Thee!

III. UNITE. Unite your intention to that of Jesus Christ. Then it becomes perfect. Then all these desires are realised. Then your intention becomes, in a sense, infinite.

IV RECOMMEND. Ask God to help you in all this. "Deus in adjutorium meum intende!" O God, come to my assistance! O my Lord, Thou seest my desires; Thou seest my infirmity. Help me to keep my aim!

HOW TO LOVE GOD MORE

"I am come to cast fire on the earth."—S. LUKE xii. 49.

1st PRELUDE. Consider Jesus Christ coming on earth in order to kindle the fire.

2nd PRELUDE. O my God, teach me how it may be kindled in me.

I. Chiefly by prayer. For it is supernatural, and therefore cannot be got by our own efforts. It must be the gift of God. Pinamonti says that prayer is not only the absolutely necessary, but also the infallible means. That is a great comfort.

II. Jesus Christ Himself desires to kindle that fire. It is what He came on earth to do. If, then, you ask for it, you are asking what satisfies His desires as well as your own. A great encouragement. We don't ask it enough.

III. No difficulty about motives. The infinite perfections of God, all His goodness to us—all clear enough.

What is wanting is the practice, not in appreciation, but in the continual sacrifice of self-love. Love that won't stir a finger for the object loved, if inconvenient or unpleasant to self, is no real love. Here is the obstacle in the lazy, self-indulgent will.

COLLOQUY. O my God! I desire to love Thee! I do love Thee; but self stops the way. Help me to hate self, to despise it, to make war on it, and so to love Thee efficaciously more and more!

N.B.—Pinamonti says exactly the same—the great obstacle is self-love, *i.e.*, our evil inclination to satisfy ourselves, even against the will of God. This must be sought out, combated, and destroyed by constant contrary acts. If you only fight when it costs you little, you will never attain to love. You must hate yourself by mortification if you would love God, by mortifying what pleases nature, a continual victory over inclinations, a continual search after occasions of self-conquest.

THE LORD'S VINEYARD

See the vineyard with its press, tower, hedge of thorns.
Hear our Lord's complaint.—ISA. v.

1. Planted with the choicest vines. A tower for watch, a hedge to protect, all the stones picked out. The Master comes and looks for good grapes; He only finds wild ones.

2. That is a soul in religion. Every help, every privilege given, every obstacle taken away. What more could our Lord have done? Yet what fruit!

Little foxes have broken through the hedge, and devoured the blossoms and torn up the roots. There are a few bunches of grapes, poor and sour.

The birds of distractions have eaten some; self-love, negligence, sloth have caused others to decay—not one left to give to God! O my God, Thou couldst not do more than Thou hast done! Thou couldst not give me more! I have no excuse left. If I do not produce the best fruit, it is all my own fault.

But spare me yet a while. Do not break the hedge down. Do not give me up ! Help me even yet to bear fruit, to do better !

THE RISEN BODY

1st PRELUDE. Set before you our Lord after His resurrection.

2nd PRELUDE. O Lord ! let me, too, rise again.

1. What are the qualities of a risen body ? Glory, agility, impassibility, and subtlety. Consider them one by one.

(*a*) Glory, or light.—If I am risen with Christ, I must be enlightened by grace and perfected by charity. This light is chiefly in the understanding.

(*b*) Impassible.—Despising pain, despising difficulty—not counting it, rising above it.

(*c*) Agile.—Ready to move, to undertake all God requires—active, ardent, facile.

(*d*) Subtle —Nothing stops it. It passes through all obstacles. It is as though the body were a soul.

2. Compare these qualities with dulness and brutishness of mind—intolerance of the least pain or inconvenience ; sloth, heaviness, resistance, shrinking from difficulties, cowardice

But to gain these qualities we must first die to self.

There must be a mortal combat. If I am not willing to fight it, I must remain the gross, earthly thing I am.

COLLOQUY. O my God ! Give me light ! Give me courage ! Make me prompt to follow Thee ! Let me overcome all obstacles.

COWARDICE IN PRAYER

" Could you not watch one hour with Me."—S. MATT. xxvi. 40.

Imagine our Lord asking this of you.

O Lord, I am the *ignavus miles!* [1] Pardon and help.

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[1] Cowardly soldier.

1. Evidently they could have watched, or our Lord would not have reproached them for not doing so. He never urges us to do what we cannot, or blames us if we fail. If we say "I cannot," it is simply the delusion of cowardice, of sloth. Cowardice! *Me!* Perhaps people give me credit for courage. I am always exhorting others to courage, to effort. All the while, secretly, known only to God and myself, I am "lâche"—the *ignavus miles*.

2. I can often watch for the hour when other things are at stake, but not God's honour and glory. I can make efforts over what interests me, for some one I care for (as though one could care for any one more than for God!). He has a right to say, "Could you not watch with Me?" as though He said, "you can for another, or for yourself."

Dwell on the detestable unworthiness of this: to do for creatures or for self what one will not do for Him.

Colloquy. O Lord, I have no excuse. It is Thou who must come to my aid. I must watch with Thee. Do Thou watch with me. If of myself I can do nothing, in Thee and with Thee I can do all things.

FAITH

"*Credis hoc?*"—"Believest thou this?"—S. John xi. 26.

My God, I believe. Teach me what it is to believe.

1. Yes, I believe all: Creation, Redemption, the Incarnation, the Passion, the Sacraments, grace, prayer, the last things, Heaven, Hell, Eternity. I believe that God made me—loves me—has died for me; that He created me for Himself, for eternal glory; that He is my end and my beatitude. I believe it all. I have never doubted it

2. And yet, might not God take each article of faith one by one and ask me, *Credis hoc?* Do you really believe this? Do you believe that He created you?—then you belong to Him. That He died to redeem you?

—then you belong to Him doubly. That He loves you? —then you must love Him. That He made you for Himself?—then you have no other end.

3. But suppose you live to please yourself, that you do not give Him your whole service, that you do not love Him with your whole heart, that you are idle and neglect the things of salvation? If you really believed in eternal life, would you not do all in your power to secure it? If you really believed in hell, would you not suffer anything to escape it?

May not God truly ask you, "Believest thou this?"

And yet—

COLLOQUY. O my God, I do believe; what I want is the grace to live by faith, not by sense. Give me a living faith, to see in very truth that the things of faith are alone of any account, and that all the things of sense are nothing.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

"Fiat tibi sicut vis."—S. MATT. xv. 28.

1st PRELUDE. See her imploring Jesus for mercy—He seems not to heed.

2nd PRELUDE. O Lord, I would know the secret with which she gained the victory.

I. She is a mother in distress, praying for her child.

Our Lord pays no heed. The Apostles intercede, but against her. "Send her away: she crieth after us." He seems to do as they wish; He speaks, but it is to refuse.

Could you blame her very much if she had said, "No use to pray, He will not hear me—He drives me away"? But no; she comes nearer, she follows Him. "Lord, help me." He replies, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

What has self-love to say? A dog! Is that the way He treats me?

II. Yes, I am a dog—much worse than a dog, for dogs are faithful to their master. I do not deserve the bread; I do not ask for it. Only for crumbs.

Crumbs! that word gained from our Lord another word. *Fiat tibi sicut vis!* Whatever you wish, you may get it all by prayer—humble, persevering, faithful, loving prayer. But then it must be *vis*, will—not only wish.

All. O my God, can it be all that I will? All I need, all I ask for? May I have it *all*? I only want, I only ask for one thing—give me Thy love! give me Thy grace with Thy love—give me perseverance—give me pardon—give me eternal life—give me Thyself!

THE TRANSFIGURATION

S. Matt. xvii.

1st Prelude. Gaze on Jesus transfigured. Peter, James, and John are not.

2nd Prelude. O Lord, neither am I transfigured; help me to become so.

I. How? By grace. In Jesus Christ—by victory over nature.

Nature and grace. How dissimilar! And yet, if I were to become a saint to-morrow, I should still be myself, only myself transfigured—it would be my own nature, only my nature sanctified.

Grace. I have it, I hope. Baptized—in a state of grace. Yes, but grace has not yet taken entire possesson of me; it has not complete dominion over nature. It has not transformed me into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

II. How is this to be done?

First you must go to the mountain—you must rise above the world and sense. You must be alone with Jesus. You must look at Him in prayer—no transfiguration without prayer. But even on Thabor "they spoke of His Passion."

There was to be suffering and mortification. Nature was to be crucified. Thabor even was not Heaven. The Apostles talked of making three tabernacles. No; they were not to stay there. The time of rest was not yet come. There was to be labour still, and effort. The life of grace alone transfigures, and it consists in prayer and mortification.

COLLOQUY. O my Jesus, make me like to Thee! If I would be like Thee on Thabor, I too must accomplish my crucifixion. If I would have my nature glorified and sanctified, I must consent that it first be conquered and suffer death!

PRAYER

1st PRELUDE. The Apostles say, "Lord, teach us to pray" (S. Luke xi. 1).

2nd PRELUDE. O Lord, teach me also!

I. We do not know how to pray aright unless Jesus Himself teaches us. Why is this? We need everything; we can do nothing for ourselves. God can do all for us, but of ourselves we know not how to pray.

II. It is that we want faith. We live so much in our senses, and not enough in the presence of God. Therefore the first thing necessary is to place ourselves in His presence. *Our Father.*

III. What must I ask for? Everything. Pardon, grace, more faith, more contrition, more love, more perseverance. This for myself. But I must ask for more than this—for God's glory; for souls; for the Church; for His own intentions.

IV. The intentions of Jesus Christ! The dispositions of the Heart of Jesus! What are they? Reflect.

COLLOQUY. O my Lord, give me what I need—give me faith, love, confidence; I unite my heart to Thy Heart, my prayer to Thy prayer, my desires to Thy desires!

Give me the grace of prayer, that I may pray as Thou would have me to pray, and that without ceasing!

[This meditation and the three which follow were written in September 1893, just before Mother Francis Raphael's last illness.]

"VACATE ET VIDETE, QUIA EGO SUM DEUS"

Ps. xlv. 11.

VACATE: Empty thyself; cast thyself away.

VACATE: For thou art nought: God is all.

VIDETE: Look on Him; not on my image, but on Him. Thou canst not see Him as He is; that is for Heaven. Thou canst only behold Him in Jesus, and "in the cloud."

This beholding of God in the cloud seems to consist in a simple, restful adherence of the soul to God; without images, without discursive thoughts or reasoning, almost without acts; or rather, it is one intense act of desire and self-oblivion.

God and myself. God all; myself nothing. Yet a nothing which He will fill. He made it that He might fill it and possess it. He made it for Himself. And it has no end, no meaning at all, unless it is united to Him.

Out of this proceed certain lights:—

1. This profound sense of quiet and rest in God may not, and probably will not, last. We must not struggle to retain it if God does not give it.

What we must retain is the firm resolve to adhere to God, in darkness or light, in trouble or in consolation, and in this a substantial peace and safety will always be found.

2. The nearness to God which this brings with it demands (and that with great earnestness) great fidelity, chiefly in the following things:—

Keep out trifling thought and day-dreams.

Banish the least approach to vanity.

Quell peevishness and irritability.

Guard charity and patience and forbearance with others, and watch against all *little* faults, little breaches of rule, little distractions, little infidelities to conscience —difficult to be precise, but there seems a very close connection between increased nearness to God and increased fidelity.

Most specially as to words and judgments of others.

3. It seems also the safer course not to think too much about any unusual sense of grace, and to go on in the ordinary way. If God desires and means to draw the soul in any special way, He will do it; but we must not seek it. Seek nothing but Him.

4. Constant prayer for light and humility—self-abasement, self-nothingness.

5. Also keep out curiosity about external things, and all that cumbers the memory. What is necessary must be attended to; what is unnecessary is a snare.

6. Recommend this matter constantly to our Blessed Lady. How can she refuse to help us in obtaining more love for her Divine Son? We may ask it confidently, and she will obtain it for us infallibly.

It is all so simple—to forget self and desire God. "My eyes are ever towards the Lord, and He will pluck my feet out of the snare."

"My substance is as nothing before Thee." "Seek ye My face: Thy face, O Lord, will I seek."

THE LOVE OF GOD, THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

Before one can get the love of God, one must desire it. There must be a darkness before there can be light. This darkness is the forgetting of all things—of one's self, one's good, and one's bad—past sins, past everything—and simply fastening the point of one's heart and mind and soul on God in desire. No light, no great sweetness, nothing but the deep sense that we have nothing and are nothing; that God is our all, and that we must have Him, and only Him

More than this perhaps He will not think fit to give us; if so, with this we will be content.

O my God, my Jesus! On Thee I fix my heart, my whole being, memory, understanding, and will. I will cast all else, even the thought of my sins, away, and trust all to Thee!

Of one thing I am certain, that I desire nothing in this world but Thee, Thy love, and Thy grace!

How anything so vile, so impure, so full of all evil as I am can be saved, can come to Thee, can be united to Thee, I know not. All I know is that I desire it with my whole heart and soul; that I desire nothing else; that, if I could, I would shut myself up in a cave, and concentrate all my powers of body and soul in one unceasing act of desire, which should be, "Give me Thy holy love. Be my all; do not let me be separated from Thee, my God and my All!" Or rather, which, without any words at all, should simply turn itself on Thee, with the eye of the soul, of the heart, in one simple, interior act of intense desire.

This I do now. The world has passed; life is almost gone; nothing left but a few embers and dregs. No use in regrets; I have done with them. All that is left I give to God, I turn to God, I fix on God, and leave the rest to Him!

ETERNAL LIFE

"This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."—S. JOHN xvii. 3.

I find the same truth here—to know God. This is All. This is eternal life.

How can I know God? Surely only by turning on Him all my powers, all my heart, all my soul.

Is it not what Our Lord Himself taught us when He bid us love God with all our soul, and heart, and mind, and strength? To love—what is it but to give one's self, casting all else away? And to love God—what is it but to set Him before us as the only Good, Beauty, Truth, Life, Light, all that is desirable—and then to desire that Good with all the strength that is in me? ..

And He made me for this, for Himself. Dwell on the thought. He made me for this, and nothing else.

Then let nothing else have part or parcel in my desires; all that I am and all that I have, let me give it to the one only object of my soul.

God and my soul; there is nothing else—all else fades away and shrivels.

God who made me for Himself, "to be happy with Him for ever in heaven"—who has espoused me to Himself! Wonderful thought! What a pledge of eternal life—I know even so it may be forfeited. Still it reveals to me that His will is to save me.

Why should I doubt or fear? This wretched past—this wretched *me;* but I will fling it and the thought of it away. God is Jesus; God near me, in me, around me, before me; God only, nothing else. Of my own strength and will I cannot attain to love. I know that. But I can desire. Even that is His gift, but He has given it to me, and I do desire, and I will keep on desiring, feeling or no feeling, sweetness or no sweetness; thirsting, longing only for one thing—God.

Perhaps He will accept the desire, and transform it into perfect love. "Give me Thy grace with Thy love, and it is enough, and I desire nothing more."

I should think not. What more is there to wish for in this world?

O Thou most beautiful, most sweet, most true, most loving One, let me love Thee, let me long after Thee!

The beautiful earth, the sky, the sea, the foliage—I cared for it once, but it is now dead and empty, except that it is a reflection of the only living reality.

God in all—all in God. All without Him nothing. All shadows of the one reality. When will the day break and the shadows flee away? When shall I see Him, and be satisfied?

II

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

I. EXTRACTS FROM PRIVATE LETTERS

ONE of Mother Francis Raphael's great works as a Superior was her spiritual correspondence. Her children soon found that they could get clear and beautiful answers to all their questions for the asking, and that, on the whole, she rather perferred writing to speaking, so that, even to those living in the same convent with her, she often wrote what she had to say: and she wrote with such rapidity, that the amount of letters she got through was something marvellous. She never spared herself time or trouble if she thought one of her children was suffering or in difficulty, and has been known to write three notes to the same person in one day when she thought she had not succeeded in helping her.

Of course the greater part of this correspondence is too sacred for the eyes of any but those to whom it was addressed; and perhaps the extracts given here will hardly reveal the delicacy, the reverent touch, with which she dealt with souls who applied to her for help. Those with whom she was most perfectly at home always felt this *respect.* It was the voice of a leader indeed, but a leader who was toiling up the hill by one's side, and bearing with one the burden and heat of the day.

Her perseverance was unwearied: she would repeat the same thing over and over again, and she never despaired. "Try to deal with souls as God deals with them," she would often say to Superiors; and she certainly carried out the maxim in her own conduct. Perhaps nothing brings out Mother Francis Raphael's humility more naturally than her way of giving advice or reproof.

"I was very glad to get your note," she writes to one with whom she was quite at her ease, "and it did me a great deal of good. You will wonder why, perhaps; but I have suffered so much from fearing that none of you believed I cared a straw about you, that anything which assures me of the contrary is a comfort.

"This you may be sure of, that you need never fear any want of tenderness in my heart, even though (as they tell me) my manner is, like yours, often stern and abrupt. I am hasty, and absent, and impatient, and all manner of other bad things, but hard I never was, and I believe I can be just. . . . You have got a soul and a heart, and you are one who never could rest content with the mere dry husk of religious life: you want the real thing or you can never be happy. And that real thing is subjection of the whole nature to God because we love Him—not merely because He is our Master, but because He is the Lord of our heart, and so it is sweet to us to give Him all.

"As to your faults, I used to think your exterior in Choir wanted mending—shall I say as much as my own? and that would be a good deal; and then your manner used often to repel others by its brusquerie. I made the resolution to overcome my own abrupt manner; and, badly enough as I have succeeded, the effort, I am aware, has softened a great many asperities.—Just try it, and you will see how it makes war on selfishness. Do we all think enough of this as a duty in Community life?"

Even in the brief extracts from her spiritual letters here given, the solid principles of spiritual life, in which she had been trained by Archbishop Ullathorne, and which were developed by her deep study of S. Catherine's writings, come out at every turn.

The many passages on troubles and trials might give an untrue idea of the bright and joyous character of her relations with her children. But it must be remembered that the letters stretch over a long period of years, and embrace a number of people; and that, while the innumerable little notes full of playful humour are too trivial for general interest, those which were drawn forth by the appeal for comfort may be of use to the large community of sufferers.

May they bring some little light and consolation to those into whose hands they may fall, and some accidental joy to her who penned them in the maternal love of her heart ; and may those who read them not forget to pray for her eternal repose.

TO SUPERIORESSES

" In superiority, there is one thing we should always be trying to fix in our minds, namely, that our care and our love must be for *all ;* that all must be judged with equal impartiality and justice, and our time and labour equally at the service of all. We should resist the promptings of self-love, which are sure to be telling us that we do not need this reminder, because it is so, and there is nothing about which we are more solicitous. As a fact, no doubt we wish it to be so, but equally as a fact I believe entire candour would often find specks in our observance of this point, and every Superior requires a constant reminder. God alone is perfectly just and impartial. What we have to do is to be as like God as we can, to deal with souls as God deals with them.

" ' Be solicitous for nothing, but in all things, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God ! '

" The following virtues make us like to God ; the exercise of them, therefore, will never distract us from Him : patience, long-suffering, compassion, condescension to the weak, beneficence or kindness, benignity or sweetness, liberality, goodness both in giving and forgiving, constancy, fidelity. These two last make people feel they can trust us." . . .

" When you are providing temporal things for others, endeavour to do it as imitating the Providence of God ;

when you listen to their troubles and complaints, think of God listening to our prayers.

"As to your remark about anger, my experience goes the other way; and I think you will find the weight of authority squeezes the fire out of one. But I think honestly that you have more of the imperiousness of command in you than I have; and probably it is this element that tends to anger. If so, my dearest, take it as a light, and mortify it generously. We must, as Superiors, command, but in no duty do we more stand in need of humility, and you will find that the curbing even of righteous indignation is a great means of exercising ourselves in that virtue.

"You will see all through the subject of anger and command, if you take this light to guide you—that command implies strength, but that everything bordering on passion, and notably anger, is of the element, not of strength, but of weakness. All real strength is calm. The expiring whale lashes the sea into foam with its tail; but I fancy when in its health and strength, it moves through the waters with a glide. (You will say wickedly: 'With an occasional spout as safety-valve;' and so my simile breaks down.) Nevertheless in the above is a grain of truth."

"Never mind and never grudge storms, my dearest Sister and child. Have a brave heart and meet them in the strength of God, not your own. He husbands difficulties for us in order to teach us the secret of true fortitude, which means casting our care upon Him and being patient. . . . There is such a difference between seeing, and even teaching principles, and exercising ourselves in them, that it is necessary for us to be brought face to face with what really tries and upsets nature to learn how to manage and subdue it. So don't be discouraged at the tempest.

"Our dearest Mother Imelda used to say that the work of a Superior was to walk about the walls of Jerusalem, and constantly keep doing something to keep them in repair: a brick loose here, mortar falling out there; a big buttress wanted in one place, and slates blown away in another. It is very like it; and so we must fulfil our daily task and sing over it. God is very good to let us do anything for Him, and, if we only sing loud enough, He will see that the work is not thrown away.

"I am reading some of S. Francis de Sales' letters, and they do me a world of good. 'Since God has given you the charge over other souls,' he says to a Superior, 'give Him the charge of yours, and ask Him to bear both you and your burden.' In order to cut short all the arguments of human prudence, remember that our Lord has taught us to pray, not for yearly or monthly, but for *daily* bread. Try to do your best to-day, without thinking of to-morrow; then next day the same; and so your whole time of office will glide away without anxious care; for your Heavenly Father, who guides you to-day, will guide you to-morrow, in proportion to your conscious weakness and absolute trust in Him.

"There, I have given you a nice little sweetmeat!

"I have been reading Gay's beautiful 'Elevations' on the tenth chapter of S. John, which is certainly one of the Gospels for Superiors to read and study.

"The knowledge of a great many miseries must never discourage us. I suppose what we have to do is to put God before us as our model, and try to look at souls, as far as possible, as He does. He sees and knows us through and through, and yet He is patient and indulgent. He sees not what we are worth in ourselves, but His own image, and what He has a mind to bring us to, His ideal. And we must see the same in others. The longer I live, the more I am sure, that, if we are ever to do the very least bit of good with souls, it will only be by imitating God's dealings with them as far as we can,

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[1] "Elévations sur la Vie et les Mystères de N. S. J. C.," par Mgr. Charles Gay.

and treating them with boundless indulgence and compassion."

"It has not gone the right way at all," she writes, alluding to a misunderstanding she had in vain tried to set straight, "owing doubtless to general odiousness on my own part. Our Lord overrules all these things, and brings His own ends out of our messes, so I leave it in His hands. There is nothing for it but to bow and retire, and put it into the little pipe of rebuffs and humiliations, which it is excellent to smoke at times."

During Bishop Ullathorne's illness in 1884 she wrote: "You see the Bishop goes on. The short Pastoral dictated by him speaks of the more serious symptoms of his protracted illness having disappeared, though he cannot say he has reached the stage of convalescence; so that there is nothing for it but for us to 'go on' too. *Expecta Dominum; viriliter age; et confortetur cor tuum, et sustine Dominum.*[1] I try and make these words my daily meditation; and I do feel, that, in a long-protracted anxiety of this sort, one does gain something; for one can but cling fast to God, and His Holy Will, and leave all else in oblivion. And one cannot do that of one's self; it is only trial that compels the soul so to submit; and thus '*trial worketh patience.*' "

ON THE DIRECTION OF THE WILL

"So far as I have read the Bishop's book,[2] I should say that its great work was to impress the truth that everything consists in the right ordering of the will, to make us think more of our wills, and struggle harder to subject them and to exert them; to show that with a good will, aided by God's grace, all things are possible. I will just say that for Novices, their aim should be to understand this, both as the ground on which they are required to submit their wills, and as including the continual exercise to which they must be faithful, withholding their own will from self and exercising it on obedience. When we have this well imprinted on the mind, we seem to see that in temptation and after committing a fault, all we have to do is at once to draw away the will. Take any habitual besetting fault, such as vanity—so difficult to correct—and yet, when conscious of any movement of the kind, it is something practical if one can at once draw the will away from it. Or in having to do unpleasant things or bear unpleasant things from others, it is impossible not to feel the repugnance, but we can make our will accept it.

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[1] "Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord" (Ps. xxvi. 14).

[2] "The Groundwork of Christian Virtues." by Archbishop Ullathorne.

"What we have chiefly to do is to try and get this strength of will, in refusing the pleasant and bearing the unpleasant, by practising it whenever we have the opportunity, and to do it with the motive and intention of subjecting our will to the grace of God. Then this shows how all may be reduced to one act. For what I have said is, of course, true mortification ; it is fidelity, it is humility too, the very essence of which is the subjection of the will to God. It is abandonment and conformity, and it necessarily implies prayer, for we could never attempt such a practice without the help of prayer. So that, no doubt, if we could earnestly embrace this one practice and stick to it, we should be doing many things at once without the confusion of multiplicity."

In October 1882, the first anniversary of Mother Imelda Poole's death, she writes : "The return of this season and the memories it brings with it, has about as much pain as either you or I can bear, and what we both have to do, not once but every moment, is to bring our hearts before God with entire resignation to give whatever He may demand of us and to accept whatever He may dispense.

"The understanding alone will not move the will. For this you must pray. But, no doubt, you will say that is just where you feel languid and full of disgust. Never mind. Remember that prayer does not consist in the relish for prayer. Pray in spite of your languor; and if you will but have the courage to do so, after a bit the languor will disappear. The whole history of tepid fits, which are so terribly painful, lies in our yielding to sloth; then it goes on to disgust and misery; and in that furrow we lie till something at last rouses us to an effort, and then we find out that, if we had made the effort a month ago, we should have got out of our furrow. Tepidity is much like what Pope says of the 'spleen' (*i.e.*, bad spirits): 'Fling but a stone, the monster flies;' only it is so hard to fling the stone. But you must do it, that is, you must pray that your will may be strengthened, and you must go on praying, not caring whether it seems a help to you or not; but infallibly it will help you before long. All these fits of interior misery are really of the family of spiritual sloth; and prayer with effort is the remedy.

"A soul habitually obeying the instincts of grace and resisting the movements of nature, is on the way to sanctity. A soul habitually obeying the movements of nature and resisting and turning a deaf ear to the invitations of grace, is on the other road. It all lies in the direction of the will.

"No doubt there are many failings and frequent failures, if you take your life day by day. Yet, if you take it as a whole, it has the surest sign that ought to encourage you; I mean there is the central desire of your heart to *overcome.* You have the sense of struggle. You do not see much progress or much gain: you see the failures, and they humble you. God looks lovingly on the desire of the poor soul conscious of its infirmity, and He has His own reasons for permitting you to fall into faults; one, no doubt, is that you may learn to know yourself by your own experience, in the light of self-conviction, not by what others tell you of yourself. Well then, the fruit of this is substantial humility. The sensitive part is still very often proud, rebellious, self-willed, but within it all is a germ of life. Cherish it, my dear sister, and love your own abjection, but do not dwell on it. Rise with courage, with hopeful magnanimity, certain of final victory, because you are so certain that the victory can never come from yourself. Then it must come from God; and, if the work is His, it will stand.

"Perfection consists in an entire dependence an Almighty God and conformity to His will, and is, in fact, simplicity. When the body is out of health, it feels a hundred symptoms; whereas, when it is in a healthy state, it is not conscious of any. It is just so with the soul. Perfection may be called the health of the soul.

"Many faults arise from a certain sensitive self-love. If you find it to be so, give your attention rather to strengthening your will to the work of real earnest resistance and victory over this enemy, than to the mere detection of its presence. Every victory over self-love must be painful to nature: this cannot be avoided. The thing is to be satisfied to put up with this little pain, to endure it cheerfully, to make small account of it in comparison with the great gain which is yours by every blow delivered to this root of evil. I say again, the grand object is to get the will thoroughly in earnest to take the work in hand and carry it on at all costs, despising the little twinges of wounded feeling which you will have to endure, and keeping your eye on the end in view. When people fail in achieving this sort of self-conquest, it generally arises from this, their having worked with only half a will. They examined themselves, they saw their faults, they knew this or that to be grave imperfections; but they had not the courage to elicit an earnest resolve of the will against them. Of course this grace must be sought in prayer from God; but then He is sure to give the grace; what we have to be sure of is that we use it, and exercise our will manfully, heartily, generously."

ON WHAT THE SOUL DESIRES

"You do not want your whole spiritual life to be identified, nor even too exclusively connected with your office —you want an individual consciousness separate from those duties and associations. It is so, and I completely re-echo the feeling; and I think it a very important thing to aim at. I will say to you exactly what I have been saying to myself: You want something; but what do you want? And how are you going to get it? What I desire is more close and more uninterrupted union with God. But that is too vague, unless I have some fixed way of aiming at it. I want my soul to be in the attitude in which I should wish it to be when I have to meet God. It would be so dreadful to meet Him suddenly, as if by surprise, and so sweet if I had been always looking out for Him, and expecting Him, and preparing for Him. That word 'preparing' seems to tell me exactly what I want. If I had to meet Him an hour hence, what should I wish to have in my heart, and always to have had? First, faith—an intense faith which makes all things of sense like so many shadows; a habit of always referring in my own mind to the invisible, and despising and not caring for, rather than mortifying, all that is sensible and visible. Therefore, the first thing for me to do is to exercise this faith, and to make it grow by direct exercise. Then hope—to oblige myself to realise that one day, perhaps very soon, I shall be with God. I am His and He is mine; I have given myself to Him and He has given Himself to me. I am confident that He will save me; and, unless I apostatise from His love and His grace, I shall be saved.

"God is my end. I am made for Him, just as a fish is made to live in the water. I want Him and nothing but Him—my God and my all. Everything else in Him: souls for His sake; infinite Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and to give my whole heart to it—this is love.

"Next, abandonment. There is no love without abandonment to what we love. Once love without measure, and you feel you can have no reserve; you can keep nothing back. If what you love is infinitely above you, you can fling yourself upon it, the more blindly the happier for you. I feel, that, if once we found our way to this abandonment, we should stop here, and go no farther, and want nothing more, because it is a fathomless abyss. But there may be times when we cannot find the door open to it, and so we must try some other door.

"Perhaps the consciousness of our own misery starts up whilst we are engaged with the Beauty of God; and then, instead of the sweetness of abandonment, may come the prick of compunction. I should not like to meet God without a sense of compunction, even if it should soon be swallowed up in the vision of Him. But in the exercise of preparation, compunction should certainly take its place.

"As I look at His beauty, I begin to see how vile I have been and am, how unworthy and how unfaithful. So, next to compunction, comes fidelity. But fidelity does not seem to satisfy me. I want something more of the nature of abandonment, more venturesome; I think I shall find it in devotedness or self-sacrifice. By this, I mean the indifference to all self-pleasing, even to what we call happiness, the looking on myself and my natural happiness as the material out of which I can find victims for God. The never refusing Him anything seems a paltry kind of way of putting it: rather, the imitating Him in the necessity He is under of giving Himself to me and to all His creatures. This perfection of unselfish love, disinterested love, and self-sacrificing love, seems what I desire; but I can only exercise it through creatures, and also by a very exact resignation to all providential appointments. It also includes the exercise of patience.

"What is fervour? Not necessarily consolation or enthusiasm, but a will that is wide awake and in action, aiming at something definite, making distinct efforts, persevering in them, and doing its best."

ON HUMILITY

" Humility is based on a true sense of our own nothingness and of the greatness of God. When we once apprehend that we are nothing, the folly of seeking for esteem or striving to produce ourselves follows without argument. For this reason it is safer to accustom ourselves to be familiar with the thought of our nothingness than of our faults. For self-love has something in it so inherently perverse that it will contrive to get satisfaction out of producing faults before the eyes of others, if it cannot produce virtues. The real cure and the real mortification to self is the putting self in oblivion, as a thing not to be considered, or valued, or gratified, or made much of, simply because it is so worthless, being nothing.

"This, therefore, applies to that particular form of self-love which we call vanity, and which seems specially to urge us to wish to be noticed, favourably if we can, but anyhow to be noticed, so that we may occupy the thoughts and interest of others. Let us get a right idea of the interior movements of the heart which we feel at times, prompting wishes of the sort. This in itself is no act. It is merely the corrupt movement of self-love making itself felt.

" It may become sensible, even in the midst of our best and holiest actions, and yet not vitiate them at all, provided that when we are conscious of it we detest it, abase ourselves, and do nothing which it suggests. And if we treat it in this way, it will become an abundant source of merit; and in time, if God permit, will be entirely under our control.

" S. Alphonsus Liguori, one of the humblest of the Saints, acknowledged to occasionally feeling the suggestion of elation when he was being incensed at a great function, and describes his interior confusion when such a thing presented itself to him. No doubt the profound act of self-abasement he made, when he was conscious of the momentary stirring within him, advanced him many degrees more in humility than he would have gained if he had not felt it. The movement, unconsented to, was no sin; the resistance, proceeding from the depth of the heart, was a true act, most pleasing to God and meritorious.

"It seems to me that we can apply this to a great many little occasions in our own daily life, when the suggestions of one or other of our corrupt passions make themselves felt.

"There is precisely the same correspondence between humility and charity as between the teeth of two shells that fit into one another. The hollows of one correspond to the points of the other, like a concave and convex surface. Just in proportion as you get rid of pride and self-will you will make room for charity.

"Thank God you are getting nearer to our Lady. She is the mother of humility. Oh, my dear sister, let us concentrate all our efforts on this lovely virtue. It is sanctity: without it nothing is. S. Augustine says, 'The humble heart is the heart of Christ.' Don't forget that."

To a lady about to present herself as a postulant, she wrote—

"So far from contradicting you when you say you are altogether unworthy of this favour, I can only assure you that you can never have a deep enough sense of your own unworthiness. Imagine any little creature being *worthy* to be united to God! The only thing left for us is to keep sinking down every day deeper and deeper into the sense of that unworthiness. Then one deep will call upon another; the deep of our misery will call on the deep of His loving mercy; and so, somehow or another, wretched as we are, all will turn to His glory.

"Oh, how good God is to have given you this contempt of yourself and this love for Him! Let these two things, my dearest child, serve as the foundation of your religious life. You know we build foundations, first by digging out the earth and making an empty hole—that is, humility—and then by putting in some good strong stones and cement—that is love. On this you can build anything. Only despise yourself and love God, and the foundations of sanctity are laid."

ON SELF-LOVE

Writing to a Sister on the anniversary of her profession, she says—

"I suppose one day or other we have all said, 'There is only one thing I care for, and that is to love God.' Then God takes us at our word, and tries to help us by digging out self-love. That hurts us, and so we cry out, but there is no other way. So let Him dig, and we will dig with Him; and, when all the rubbish is cleared away, and a nice empty space made, He will pour in the beautiful wine out of His wine-cellar, and we shall have our heart's desire."

On the same subject she writes—

"I think one may be too conscious on the subject of self-love. It has a way of making itself felt if one is always on the hunt; and I believe it is oftener more to the purpose to chase it away by the practice of purity of intention, which in the long-run knocks self to pieces.

"You see this touches your second complaint about want of actual intention. . . . We are full of ourselves if we are not full of God. But, if we can contrive to be more full of God, self-love is driven out. Now this, and the overcoming sloth in prayer, and greater devotion and attention in hearing Mass, are all things which we can get, but only by working, and I confess I think by working at them in what may seem at first sight a mechanical way—conscience-book, etc., I have found the greatest help from writing down for a week to come the intentions for which I will hear Mass each day, and reading them over the night before, and so being ready for them next morning. They often help one in meditation. I used many years ago to think these helps too artificial; but, for some years past, I have found their use in helping one's sluggish, forgetful, negligent nature to get into habits and stick to resolutions. And, without something to oblige one to earnest, definite, daily effort, one is always slipping into the vague."

ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE

"You are not to be anxious or disturbed at what you are now suffering. I can see as clearly as I ever saw anything in my life that our Lord has permitted this change of office, among other reasons, for your greater spiritual good. You know we are nothing if we are not humble; and we cannot be humble without self-knowledge, and self-knowledge comes in many ways, not the least sure way being when we find ourselves in a position in which our real interior is unveiled to us. Then the first effect of that unveiling is to terrify and disgust us with ourselves, and even to cast us into profound discouragement. But that must not last, because we must confide in God, who is only showing us our misery in order utterly to eradicate all self-confidence and self-love, and ground us in self-abasement.

"If the real interior of any of us were laid bare, we should just call on the mountains to cover us. There is not a faculty in us which we do not spoil by our self-love, our intolerable pride, and our stupid, silly vanity. But hitherto, though you have known this, you have not realised it. Now our Lord is showing it to you, and you shrink from the sight with horror. As Job, you say, 'I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Well, this is a very great grace. Do not be afraid of looking the truth in the face and saying, 'This is myself, my natural self. Hitherto, I have covered it up from my eyes, and those of others. Now I can do that no longer, and I see what I am.' Well, but do you suppose you were ever able to cover it up from our Lord's eyes? Did He not see it from the first? And, in spite of it all, He has chosen you, and called you, and loved you, and intends by His grace and His own guidance to sanctify you in spite of it all, and to bring you to Himself in eternal bliss.

"I feel great confidence that our Lord will really guide and direct you, from the fact that He begins by giving you that profoundest of all humiliations, to make you see yourself. Dearest child, don't be afraid of His teaching. Accept it, terrible as it is to self-love, and abase yourself before Him; but then rise again in increased confidence, not in yourself, but in Him."

In another letter she says—

"You must not be surprised or discouraged at what you feel about your change of office, and what you so frankly say of its effects. It is a bit of experience. No one knows till they are tried how that horrid old self does like to be made of importance, and how much it feels coming down a step, or rather what it chooses to regard in that light; for in reality as you well know, there are no ups and downs in religion: the last is first, and the first last. Don't be afraid, and above all don't neglect the real remedy; but pray, and pray hard, never noticing or taking heed whether you are dry or devout. Prayer is a business, not a pleasure; and if you will keep on and pray all the more resolutely, I am quite safe in promising you that the result will be greatly to your advancement and real happiness. You see I am not laughing at you; I quite comprehend, and only want you to take sword in hand and have a good fight with the enemy, and then laugh at yourself for minding his absurdities. The Saints used to fly from notice and honourable positions, and try to hide themselves in obscurity. I wish you could hear our Bishop describe what he felt when, after being Vicar-General of Australia, he was suddenly taken out of office, and given a class of small boys to teach at Downside. Old nature jumped about a good deal—but it was his experience."

Again :—

"Turn your self-knowledge into ground for humility instead of ground for vexation with self ; you must bear in mind the fact that it is never by not feeling the rebellion of nature that we get it purified and corrected, but the very reverse. A soul attains humility by enduring, owning, and resisting (though not always with success) the rebellion of pride. We become patient in the midst of assaults of the most troublesome and apparently irresistible impatience. It is a long process ; and what is imperatively necessary is hope, confidence, and cheerfulness."

ON THE EVIL OF CONSTANT SELF-INSPECTION

"Your error, it seems to me, is the ceaseless watching of your own interior sensations. You suffer interiorly, God permitting it, as I venture to surmise, for the same reason that He permits most souls to pass years in the consciousness of their own misery, namely, to humble them and make them feel that of themselves they are nothing—nothing with the capacity of every imaginable evil. Now, say what you will of your own vileness, you do not recognise your own nothingness ; and, if you were delivered from the interior experiences which now beset you, it is more than probable that you would feel as if you had achieved something, because that is the strong bent of your nature, to think you can get right of your own doing, whereas we get right by humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God—adoring Him in darkness as in light, abandoning ourselves to Him, subjecting ourselves to His will. In your complaints against yourself there really underlies a complaint of God. 'It is no use, I can't go on like this,' and so on, which all really means that God uses you hardly. Now He does not use you hardly; He knows what you need, and He gives it. He knows what would injure you, and He withholds it, or only gives it from time to time to encourage you. Your own exercise should be, instead of that restless contemplation of all that is base and miserable in your nature, to lay it at His feet, and adore Him, and trust Him, and then just go on and do your best."

ON SELF-ANALYSIS

"I am tempted to reply to your letter by saying—Do you see what inevitably comes of self-analysis? A creature, that is a mass of poor helpless infirmity, puts itself into the microscope and beholds nothing but corruption, just as when we put certain objects into a real microscope and are simply horrified to find them an ugly, crawling mass. The consequence, of course, is self-horror, disgust, and discouragement; and this will be the consequence with you until somehow you are content to bear with your own infirmities, and to trust, not to your own justices (which Holy Scripture calls 'filthy rags'), but to God . . . He can sanctify you; but you must let Him do it: you cannot do it of yourself. The moment when, in one sense, you give up the attempt as hopeless, and in another, cast yourself at His feet and resolve never to give it up (' though He slay me, yet will I trust Him '), will be the real moment of victory for you. At the same time I do not at all regard this as thrown away. Your efforts and your regrets, nay, your wishes even, are all reckoned in God's books.

"If I were to talk for a century, I could say no more to you than that. So long as you gaze down into the abyss of your own heart, you will never behold there what will satisfy you and give you peace. The prophet Jeremias says, ‘ The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable ; who can know it ? ’ And he adds immediately, ‘ I, the Lord, try the heart and search out the reins ; ’ as though it were for God alone to do this and to judge.

“ God loves you because He made you, and died for you, and intends to save you ; and if you would look more at this, and less at your own misery, things would go better with you.”

ON DETACHMENT

On occasion of a painful separation she wrote : “ Times of trial, heavy as they may be at this moment, bring us nearer to God, if we can but keep clinging to Him in the dark. In His own time He will make all light. The process of detachment is terrible to nature, and you must just now be feeling it in the very centre of your soul ; but its fruit, when the work is done, is something better than sweetness ; it is peace, ‘ peace which passeth knowledge.’ God works out His designs in mysterious ways, quite beyond our power to scan, but we are perfectly safe if we abandon ourselves to Him blindly, desiring nothing but to be able to love Him with a perfect love before we die.

“ Detachment need not be unloving ; it only means putting creatures in their right places ; and our disposition is to be always putting them in their wrong ones. And, just as a bone out of place causes exquisite pain, so a creature out of place causes nothing but suffering.

“ There is in the soul, even after it is given to God, a certain tendency to lay hold of some corner of nature, and to feel as if without that it must die. I can only compare it to the timidity of a child who, when made to bathe in the sea, is afraid to venture in, and lays hold of the machine, the rope, anything it can lay hold of. Only after many years, and, it may be, many blows from God, are we so stripped and severed from these bits of nature, as at last to be severed from self, and to be free in heart.

Then, and then only, we hear the word, '*Duc in altum*;'[1] then, and then only, can we let down the net for a draught.

"And very much akin to this is the clinging to human preference and affection. On that subject I can speak from experience. I do not think it is possible for one who has that natural tenderness of heart to be rid of it. Nor is it desirable. What we have to do, if we have good sense, is to try thoroughly to understand where it is dangerous, and then to be pitiless in guarding and mortifying ourselves. It is the seeking for sympathy, the dwelling on it, the not being able to do without it, and the allowing human love and human sympathy to content us, so as to blind us to the astounding truth that we, as religious, can claim all the love and all the sympathy of a Divine Heart that loves us—well, I suppose I may use S. Catherine's words, and say 'madly,' as it were to a folly—'*pazzo d'amore.*'

"It is this truth, the life, the ecstasy of a loving soul, to which the indulgence of mere natural affection blinds us. And whereas the love of God makes us strong, generous, and heroic, indifferent to consolations, and lovers rather of suffering than of ease, the love of creatures makes us soft and cowardly.

"Now for the fruits of your retreat. In the first place, we must have done with fear and half measures. *Let go the rope!* and cast yourself fearlessly into the waters of Divine Providence! 'Commit your way unto the Lord' by holy abandonment, and exercise yourself in acts of entire confidence in Him. He will take care of you, and your work, and your perfection; only you must set Him no limits."

To another she writes—

"Try to put all these likes and dislikes before you, and look at them as they really are, and as you will see them during your last sickness. What are they worth? Just a pinch of dust and no more. No, I should not say so;

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[1] "Launch out into the deep."

they are worth untold millions to your soul, as the means by which you may exercise virtue, turning from them to give your whole heart to God, making money of these little bits of dross with which to purchase Eternity. But in themselves, for a rational creature to care for and live for, they are just something too ridiculous."

To a Sister who had by her advice been reading the first volume of the works of S. John of the Cross, and who wrote to ask how far she could put in practice his instructions, she wrote—

"I am a poor creature to teach the unitive way, and you must take my notions for what they are worth, which is probably very little. First, then, I should say we must, in following S. John of the Cross's advice, use a low dilution. His practice of self-denial must have gone a good many miles farther than we can understand, far less imitate. All the same he gives us certain principles which are the kernel of the whole thing; and all that about the mortification of the desires is one of them. What it says to me is not so much, 'Deny yourself everything, don't eat butter, and never take more than one slice of meat.' People may be called to do that kind of thing and be all right—but, on the other hand, it may make them fidgety, very often censorious, and disposed to put their perfection in such practices rather than in charity and humility. But to me the thing meant, and perfectly possible not only to aim at, but to attain, is indifference, not merely to what you eat and drink, but to what happens. You resign the search after happiness, pleasure, affection, interests, and all besides. You take whatever comes, or whatever does not come, and are equally cheerful over both. Just take such a thing as health or pain. Of course you must reasonably preserve health, but as a duty, without solicitude. You don't bother about it. Food—well, you find out exactly how much you require, and stick to it. Sometimes there is more mortification in eating than in not eating.

Nobody ought to know what you like or don't like. People—you don't forbid yourself to care for them, but you are free, and don't allow one particle of your happiness to depend on whether you are with a particular creature or not, not even if they die and go to Heaven. Work and offices—well, you love your work and put your heart into it; but if you are forbidden to work, or given something quite different, you don't fret or allow yourself to be depressed. I don't mean you do not feel it, but you don't dwell on it, and above all it must not diminish your cheerfulness, or your readiness to do the other work as heartily as that which you have had to give up—and all, not so much by effort, and self-examens, as by getting God to be the centre and resting in Him. Your pendulum is at rest in its centre. He is the one object, as S. Catherine says, the one desire, the one thing we aim at; therefore it seems so stupid to be caring for and troubling ourselves about a lot of nonsense. Now this is not to be got at without our own efforts; but God does the real work, first, by giving the special grace and light and inspiration to make us see the real truth of things and their relative value; and, secondly, by cutting things away from us. *We* pray, and try after detachment; *God* gives it.

"Detachment—that is what I mean, and what expresses what I mean better than mere indifference.

"Then, of course, if we see and embrace this principle, we must not be inconsistent. We shall be inconsistent if we worry over trifles, nurse little regrets, cling to this office or that, adhere to our own will in trifles, and can't be happy with A, B, or C. But not to do so requires grace on God's part, and a correspondence on ours, which costs a good deal to the old Adam, though in the practice of it one gets, not sweetness exactly, but a peace unalterable.

"I don't know if I am clear enough or definite enough: you must tell me."

ON CORPORAL AUSTERITIES

" Penance, to do us good, must be steeped in humility and love. It must aim at chastising the proud animal nature, and bringing it into obedience to the law of Christ. It must bind us close to Him ; and, if it does that, it will infuse its own grace. Without that, we may be merely proud ascetics, which would be a bad business."

Again she writes—

" The desire, almost hunger for bodily penance, may be a delusion or may be a movement from God. If I may speak from my own experience, the best way of making penance do a work on the soul (and after all it is the soul we want to reach through the body) is by subjecting ourselves to a kind of regular course. . . . That humbles because we feel the subjection so much. And it is the persevering in such a practice, calmly, silently, without excitement or flutter, which does often effect great things on our hard nature.

" I do pray for you, and I am sure all will be right in time ; but it will be God's own work and not man's. As the author of the ' Paillettes d'Or ' says, ' God forges a soul His own way, and hammers it into shape with humiliations.'

" So, when He reveals to you some misery, do not be discouraged, and do not shrink from the sight. Look at it, for it is truth ; let it diminish your self-love and your ambition in spiritual things, and make you lowly, full of a sense of self-abasement, which is apart from everything morose or bitter ; full of sweetness and confidence in God, and a readiness to abandon everything to Him, even the care of your own perfection ; for, believe me, He will do the work better than you can."

And again—

" It is what I have always told you. You want to strike a bargain with God, to let you save your soul, not by being humble and charitable, but by performing certain penances, making day's retreats, saying such and such prayers, and such and such exercises. No use; you must go to Heaven on His conditions, not yours; and the first and foremost of these is the sacrifice of pride in its strongholds.

"You should keep on at the *Flecte quod est rigidum,*[1] and nothing else. . . .

"With regard to humility, we can never desire enough of it, never understand its wonderful price and worth to our souls. If we did, we should contend for opportunities of humiliation instead of escaping them. But love and desire them as we may in one part, we must not be surprised to find another law in our members, as S. Paul says, which hates and resists humiliations, especially the daily mortification of failures, inconsistencies, and littleness.

"We are strange creatures, infinite in desires, finite in all besides."

ON CHEERFULNESS

"You are quite right in seeking one central point to work from. If you secure this, it will be what in mechanics is called 'the centre of repose.' This differs in different souls, or rather essentially it is the same for all, because our centre of repose must always be the love of God. But it presents itself to souls under different aspects. If you regard it as the fulfilment of His Divine Will both in doing and suffering, you cannot have a sounder principle to guide you.

"I am glad you put in that other little word about cheerfulness, because I have told you before what a hidden grace there is in its practice. Natural cheerfulness is a blessed gift, but the practice of cheerfulness by the mortification of its opposite is still better. It kills self-love: I don't know any weapon that kills it more effectually, for sadness *au fond* is really nothing but sensitive self-love.

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[1] "To Thy sweet yoke our stiff necks bow."—*Sequence of Pentecost.*

" Cheerfulness is a spiritual secret not known to all : I wish it were better known. In real point of fact, the moment when one learns all its value is a moment of transformation in life ; and the reason is, that though cheerfulness is the outside, it has its roots in humility, and is fed with a good seasoning of mortification. Persevere in this practice, then, and you will soon become quite independent of the stupid circumstances which we so often and so long allow to hamper and discourage us."

ON EXPANSIVE CHARITY

" No doubt our Lord gives you light to see your faults, but they must not discourage you. We cannot err in attributing them to self-love in one form or another ; it is the domestic enemy we carry with us to our grave, and our only wisdom is in keeping up the war against it. Also, I have often told you, by nature you are not expansive and sympathetic, and your aim should be to give yourself more to those for whom you work. It demands much mortification to do so without impatience, specially when we have not the natural disposition to expand ; but it helps wonderfully in the practice of real charity. Then never forget that with what measure we mete, it is measured to us again. The more we give ourselves to others, the more God gives Himself to us.

" Much that souls suffer from dryness and want of sensible devotion would be remedied, did they pour out more of the sweetness of charity to others. It all helps to the sacrifice of self, and that is the great means of winning the love of God."

ON JUDGING OTHERS

One of the points on which Mother Francis Raphael was in the habit of speaking and writing most strongly was that of judging and criticising others.

"Except as temptations in feeling," she wrote on one occasion, "that such ideas should take possession of the reason of any mind that accepts the first principles, I won't say of religious life, but of one's duty to God, is to me incomprehensible. There are some plain maxims of right and wrong that one does not want any extraordinary grace or light to see and admit; and surely to put one's self into the position of judging almost everything done by others must be wrong. The adhering to it in the will (not the feeling) is the wrong part, and it is that which it seems to me some souls will not renounce. How can they be so inconceivably vain as to think their judgment and view of the motives and actions of others is to be trusted as the infallible one? What do they know of the reasons that make superiors act as they do? Nothing at all, and they are therefore bound to believe they act in charity and discretion.

"What can any one do to help such souls, if they will not help themselves by going against nature? And with so very much to correct in their own interior, how can they think themselves safe in occupying themselves with what they think the faults of others? Granted they were what they think them, they should leave them alone, and attend to themselves. But, until the will is bent to the practical exercise of humility, no direction will ever help them."

Again she writes—

"Characters which are not often led into exterior faults have to watch the springs of their hearts against more subtle defects, and especially against every secret movement of pride, self-judgment, or self-value. They have to be always working at purity of intention, so as to make sure that their good habits and disposition to do right are not tainted with human respect, or with the desire to build themselves up in their own esteem or in the esteem of others, but are simply to please God. They should try to make this their habitual motive, to please

God for His own sake, and not care if they are lowered in the esteem of others.

"Exterior faults and turbulent passions often really tend to guard humility and gain true self-abasement for those who are subject to them. So it is more difficult for those who have less irregular impulses to gain the same self-hatred, unless they persuade themselves that any disposition to value one's self for one's goodness may be more really corrupt in its origin, coming from a root of pride, than more visible faults of temper or the like.

"For such dispositions I would recommend constant habitual meditation on the Passion, in the light of which all our goodness withers away, and our pride becomes exceedingly hateful, and our desire to serve our Lord for the pure love of Him gains life and strength. I ask daily that the devotion of all of us to the Sacred Passion may be multiplied a thousandfold.

"For a soul whom God has not as yet led by the way of interior conflict and difficulty, it would be safe to feel that there may be many latent infirmities which she does not know of, and will not know of until she is tried. Prudence alone would counsel such a one to cherish diffidence in self as well as confidence in God.

"A soul that is not herself the victim of strong temptations and turbulent passions should have a great jealousy over herself in regard to judging others, and perhaps make this a special point of examen and exercise, because it is just *the* most important point to guard and defend. She should cherish a great compassion for those whose natures lead them into faults to which she is a stranger. Oh, how they suffer! How humbled they are in the eyes of others, and often what beautiful virtues they exercise in the sight of God, while in the eyes of men they seem contemptible.

"We should have the habit of believing this in the case of those whose disedifying faults we see, but whose struggles God only knows, and cultivate a Divine compassion for them. This is one of the dispositions of the Sacred Heart."

ON ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

To a Sister who expressed a fear lest the application of the mind to teaching and the study necessary for it, should hinder her advance in prayer, she answered—

"'It is contemplation which gives its efficaciousness to our action, just as action attains the end which is sought in contemplation. Though the two things seem to differ, yet they have the same principle and the same end' (Tauler).

"'The soul which would remain inseparably united with Me by love can do so, forasmuch as it is the desire of the heart that binds the soul to Me, so that nothing can separate us' (S. Catherine).

"I think we confuse the question by not regarding our life in its unity. We are not one person in our prayer and another in our work. Our prayer and our work are only parts of one life, and the soul of that life is our will and intention.

"As to the powers of the mind that have to be exercised in teaching, for example, we may regard them in the same light as we do the muscles of the body, which we should have to exercise if our daily work were manual or mechanical. They are not the soul; they are faculties put in motion by the soul for this or that intention; and, if the intention be obedience, the salvation of souls, or God's holy will and His glory, the occupation in which we exercise those faculties need not distract us or weaken our union with God in any degree. Union with God is not a sort of feeling which is strong one hour and weak another; it is something existing in the centre of our soul, which elects God for its object."

ON PRAYER

"My own little word to you would be to cultivate prayer, for I do not know a more fatal error than leaving our prayer to take its chance haphazard. If we don't take pains with it, and that not only at the time of actual prayer, but at other times also, how can we wonder at its failing? I am sure if you will give a little time to preparing matter for yourself it would help you to give your mind and attention to certain truths, which then would develop of themselves in time of prayer.

"If you get the centre of your soul strongly fixed on God, it does not much matter where you are, or what you do. If we realise our own misery and our need of God, then trust lovingly to Him to give us what we need, and constantly turn to Him for help, and then try to keep the habit fresh and vigorous of doing our work to please Him more and more—specially in those matters which turn either on charity or humility—these, I believe, are the points which will most surely gain for us the interior spirit; and they are not so very difficult where there is a good will.

"So never be discouraged, and be sure our Lord is far more anxious to draw you near to His Heart than you can ever guess. It is not until we gain a strong faith in His wonderful, incredible love of us, that we are able to make any real progress in loving Him."

At a time of some anxiety she wrote—

"There are some weighty matters which must be settled, and for which I want many prayers. I am just like the blind man we read of yesterday, '*Cæcus magis, et magis, clamabat ut eum Dominus illuminaret.*'[1] And I think of our precious Mother going about the house saying, 'Light! Light!' If she would only just get some for me!

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[1] "The blind man cried out more and more, that the Lord would give him sight."—Ant. for None, Quinquagesima Sunday, in Dominican Breviary.

" S. Vincent de Paul says, 'At times when human prudence ends and sees nothing clearly, then the light of Divine Wisdom begins to dawn.' It seems to me that our whole history is an illustration of these words. Always when one has seen least, has been the moment when light has come.

" Yesterday the Bishop preached a lovely sermon. He said prayer was so easy, and people fancied it so difficult. All communion of the heart with God is prayer. You have all known what it is to love a mother. Well, if you talked to her, that was love; if you listened to her, that was love; if you only looked at her, it was love; and if you worked for her, it was love always. So with God, whether we think of Him, or talk of Him, or listen to His voice in our hearts, or work for Him, it is all prayer. Was that not nice, easy, and encouraging?

" Pray very much for souls under trial; it is one of the greatest works of charity, all the more if we do it without knowing for whom we pray, and so have no personal feeling. I know a soul at present under severe trial, whose exterior conduct might seem blameworthy. Knowing her heart, I know the loveliness of her abandonment and self-humiliation, and I earnestly commend this poor soul to your prayers, that she may be supported and brought through safely."

To a Sister who asked her for some practice for Lent, she wrote—

" The only thing that has been recommending itself to me at this time is to pray for the intentions which our Divine Lord had Himself for each one of us during His Passion. He must have thought of each one and perfectly comprehended her wants and her dangers. He must have offered His precious blood for that special intention for each one.

" We are so in the dark about each other, and I dare say often ask the wrong things ; and it seems to me that this sort of prayer must be the most perfect, because it would be so perfectly in conformity with His will. Let us these three days unite in this prayer at the hour you name, and join to it an act of reparation for the faults of all for whom we are praying, our own first."

ON DISTRACTIONS

" Your office is one that necessarily fills the thoughts a good deal, and takes one out of Community life far more than one would like. You must regard it as a daily sacrifice offered to God for the sake of the children ; and if you take it and use it as a sacrifice, it will all aid in your sanctification.

" Just think of our Lord's life—what a bustle it often was ! 'Many coming and going, and no time so much as to eat.'

" Are we sure we make the most of little times, when, if we tried, we could gather ourselves together and 'return to the heart' ? There are many five minutes in the day, which, if put together, would make a respectable half-hour, which might be times of recollection and colloquy with our Lord."

Again she writes to a Sacristan—

" I suppose your office is a distracting one, but it is so directly the service of God, that you can give all your work to Him without much difficulty. All you have to do is to look to Him in your work and make it a service of love. Don't forget the old hermit who heard an angel counting every step he took when he went to draw water. May there be one to count ours as we run about our Father's business ! "

ENCOURAGEMENT

Nothing could exceed the care with which she watched against anything like discouragement in the hearts of her children.

"Don't lose time now by worrying over time lost in the past. We have got the present moment, and that only. If all the time we spend in fretting, because we have not been perfect during the last fifty years, were given to trying to be perfect during the fifty-first, something would come of it. As it is, nothing comes of it but discouragement, which is the devil's pet walking-stick.

"So now I will give you five P's to think about when you say your prayers—Pardon, Perfection, Perseverance, Peace, Paradise. That is much in five words.

"Are you in the habit of recognising the loving generosity of God ? If you can get to see and feel this more profoundly, it will help you more to making real efforts forward than hours spent on reflecting on your own misery."

The same idea in different words recurs again and again in her letters :—

"We do not love God as we ought and might do if we occupied ourselves more in studying His goodness than our badness.

"The one thing I want you to do now, is to have done with the ghosts of the past. Remember everybody has their past weaknesses, mistakes, and bothers to be sorry for ; but we only discourage and entangle ourselves by thinking of them and letting them be constantly in the atmosphere of the present. Promise me now to bury them all in the sand with the Egyptian of whom we sing in the office of S. Francis."

To a person in spiritual desolation she writes—

"To love God is to choose Him supremely as the one object of our life and end of our being ; to adhere to Him because He is so good, so beautiful, so perfect ; and to keep on telling Him so in prayer ; to do all we can to please Him, and sorrow when we offend Him, and grieve over our own shortcomings and over the sins of the whole world ; and to do this in our wills, the central part of our hearts, whether He sends us sweetness, consolation, light, hope, comfort, which makes us dance with joy, or whether He allows us to feel our misery in darkness and weight, and dulness and discomfort.

"Some people, and you are one of them, have very sensitive natures, in which the love of God first of all makes itself felt with a kind of sensible rapture. But you know that is very far from being the purest kind of love. On the contrary, there is sure to mix up with this sensible love a bit of clay and self-love. The love itself is true and generous, and pleases God, and that so much so that He can't help making it better, purer, and more solid, and moreover testing the sincerity and constancy of the soul that loves Him; and He does this by taking away the sensible sweetness and the light and the comfort, and saying to the soul, 'Now, do you love Me still'? And in her darkness and discomfort she cries out, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. I do not want comfort and sweetness, if Thou dost not want me to have them. But I want Thee and I love Thee, not Thy consolations, and I will go on loving Thee all the same if in this world I never have a drop of comfort again.' Now I think we can say this, can't we? God is always the same, not less beautiful because there is a veil between us. And as He always is the same, we must be always the same, and not love Him a morsel the less because the gross, sensible, earthly part of us is being purged and purified.

"Poor Job sat on his dunghill and bemoaned himself, and said that God had made life bitter to him: how hard it was; what had he done to deserve it? Then his wife, I suppose, suggested how little use there was in serving God, when He treated His servants in that way, and at once the immense love in Job's heart flamed out, and he said, 'Though He slay me I will trust Him.' There was love in desolation as strong and fierce as a lion."

To one whose vigour had been impaired by a long illness, she wrote—

"You, like myself, are and always have been one of the impulsive natures. Probably with both of us our faults are mostly the faults of impetuosity, and so Divine Providence applies the remedy by sapping the nervous vital energy and taking away the sense of vigour and young lionism. Then we discern how much of what we formerly may have considered fervour, moral energy, and so on, was simply physical impetuosity, and also how much of real sloth and self-indulgence kept themselves concealed, and now appear, just as the grass appears when the snow that covered it melts. I feel this in a degree from advancing years and decrease of physical strength, and you from the same cause increased by the effects of your illness.

"With both of us the thing is to replace natural impetuosity by moral force and self-repression. I know inside myself exactly what I mean. Outside, of course, impetuosity will still exist and have to be restrained as much as ever.

"Don't be afraid, then, of this feeling of weariness, and don't force yourself about it too much. Consider how much you can do, and do it, and when the body refuses to do what it used to do, suck self-abasement out of the sense of exhaustion, and try a diluted programme for the day at a slower and quieter pace.

"To have God as one's aim all day, in all to realise His nearness, and to wish to do nothing that is not His service, seems to me the Pole-star of one's declining years, and it is also the 'refrain' of the retreat."

To one who had expressed the sense of having been "a disappointment" to the Sacred Heart, she writes—

"I understand exactly what you mean, and I believe that sense of having frustrated God's designs about us is one of the saddest and profoundest sorrows of which the human heart is capable. Who that knows himself at all is without it? Who is there who can possibly silence the voice that reminds him of early calls, early instincts, which might have been followed and obeyed, and which, if obeyed, would have led to sanctity? We might have gone straight, and we have gone crooked. I believe it is the history of Adam and of every one of his children, except our Blessed Lady, not excluding the Saints. But it was not the whole either of Adam's history or theirs. Just as his fault was the *felix culpa*,[1] because it was the means in the end of God getting greater glory, and man getting a more 'copious redemption,' so in each individual case, I firmly believe that those on whom God has mercy will find hereafter that something has come to them by means of—I don't quite mean their sins—but God's overruling their sins, which would not have come to them in any other way. Do you remember the story of the Greek painter who wanted to produce a certain effect and failed, and in his vexation threw his dirty sponge at the picture, and the colours in the sponge produced exactly the effect he had been labouring at in vain? That is just what I mean: we cannot and should not of ourselves have succeeded in getting at something which God brings out of our falls. We should never have known our own misery without them; and without a knowledge of our own misery we should never have known God's mercy. There is, moreover, a certain chastened, softened spirit, which comes of being disappointed with one's self; a giving one's self up from one point of view and being obliged to leave one's self with God.

"What I mean, my dearest Sister, is that we drop many stitches in the web of life, and do well to weep bitter tears over them; but the angels gather them up, and with fingers more skilful than ours weave them into the web of our predestination; and so we offer God a workmanship more perfect and far more beautiful than could have been produced by our own efforts."

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[1] Happy fault.

To one who was apt to get into a rut of despondency, she writes—

"What I wanted to say was that your great obstacle is the unkind way in which you regard yourself. I put it in this language as best expressing it. It would be unkind so to judge another, even if we knew them to be in the wrong. However wrong people may be, we should not be spiteful to them; we should make allowance for their weakness; above all, we should never forget that God made them and loves them, and earnestly wills their salvation; that His mercy is immensely greater than their sinfulness, and that such a thing as a doom against a soul, hindering the possibility of its getting to Him, is a hideous falsehood, the invention of Satan, the very contradiction of all we know of our loving God, and of the history of His dealings with souls. . . .

"It is this spiteful despair of yourself, much more than any other fault, which is your spiritual obstacle, and you are bound to fling it from you."

To one in spiritual consolation, after urging detachment, she writes—

"But this I think I can promise you, that, even if that feeling of ardent love should go quite away, it will, in so far as it is genuine, leave behind it a something, just as the waters of the Nile leave behind them a fertilizing soil. Even in desolation that something remains; and the something is to adhere to God. 'It is good for me to adhere, that is, to stick fast, to God.'"

To another—

"Believe me, half our failures come from not studying enough how to get at love, which is the soul of our spiritual exercises, all the rest being only body. S. Thomas says that 'every act of Divine love merits eternal life.' Just meditate a bit on those words, and think of all they mean. And S. Catherine says things about the power of our desires after love and contrition which takes one's breath away, so that, even when we honestly feel the desire of love, the desire of humility, contrition, and the rest, the desire, in short, of God, these desires are accepted by Him in a wonderful way. All this makes us understand the importance of making our heart's work more. It is our all in all.

"Make a compact that each time any plaguing thought of any sort, grumbling about office or chant or the like, comes up, you will instantly take it as a reminder to make a good hearty act of Divine Love. That will be serving Satan out. He will not relish being forced to help you to multiply acts of love.

"I don't think that a certain sort of fear is a misfortune, provided it does not paralyse and discourage. The fear of God, which makes us realise His law, His purity, and the gravity and seriousness of life, is a thing to be prayed for, and, I sometimes think, is one of the great wants of ordinary piety. There is so much trifling and human respect which always seems ashamed of being quite in earnest about Divine things."

To another she writes—

"I often think that what you call indifference, is something you find it hard to describe, and which others probably do not understand as so described. It is evidently a something from which you habitually suffer, which exists in feeling, not in will. We should be glad to be rid of many feelings; and I don't know anything more trying than to feel dull, cold, hard, and insensible in the presence of mysteries which faith teaches us should just send us into an ecstasy, if we knew them aright. And then we should like to live our lives, and discharge all our duties with a fervent, glowing love, and all the time we seem to ourselves something more like a machine.

"What can we say to all this? 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;' and, if the daily cross of a loving soul is that it cannot love (as it supposes the case to be), I fancy our Divine Lord will understand us better than we understand ourselves, and that He knows why

He permits such a soul to know nothing in this life but the pain of absence.

"Your other troubles, imperfect sympathies, risings of nature, dear old Sister, don't I know them, and that by my own experience! We are praying every day—

> '*Dimitte nunc peccamina*
> *Et da quieta tempora.*'[1]

But the *quieta tempora*[2] are hard to get inside. Never mind: fight the good fight, and don't think too much about the poor old feelings. All you have got to do is to despise them, and then make a snowball of them, and throw them in the enemy's face. No good to reason with them or him. Take a stick to him and he will soon be off."

Of the many letters in answer to those of Sisters in retreat, we can only give the briefest extracts for want of space:—

"Don't be content with spending all your time on your faults, but try to get a step nearer to God. It is not He who is far away from us, but we from Him. . . . We do not make our prayer sufficiently the desire after Him. Yet we have only to set Him before us as the one infinite Good for which we were created, the infinite Beauty, the infinite Love, our end and object, without which life and all that is in it has no meaning. We can't do this earnestly for five minutes without feeling Him draw us, and the world shrivel up; because this is so absolutely the real life of the soul that we have but to turn the eyes of the soul to it, and it must respond, faintly at first, but more and more as we persevere.

"If you ask me the best means to persevere, I would say, if you have succeeded in getting hold of Almighty

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[1] Hymn for Pentecost in Dominican Breviary:—

> "Our sinfulness do Thou forgive,
> And grant us in calm times to live."

[2] Calm times.

God's hand, *don't let it go.* Keep hold of Him by constantly renewing ejaculatory prayers to Him, acts of desire, and the seeking to please Him in little things."

To another: "I don't know what book you are using; but I found Père Olivaint's notes on his retreats[1] a greater help than any book I ever used. He was a saint and a martyr, but here is the striking thing, that year after year he accuses himself of the same faults, the failure in his resolve to go against nature; and you can't help feeling that what he says is perfectly genuine, not a bit of exaggeration about it. One can't doubt that all the time he was working at the *agendo contra:*[2] only he could not change his nature, and was therefore always feeling the same heavy pull. I think something of that is true with ourselves. Of course we don't do all we could and might do; but, if we did twice as much as we do, I fancy we should always feel the same infirmity of nature; and it is permitted that we may never turn our victory into elation. So I see nothing for it but sucking humility out of our failures, and convincing ourselves that it must always be God who will save and sanctify us, and not we ourselves.

"One thing I think we should bear in mind to prevent discouragement. In retreat one is thinking and resolving: and how is it possible not to see that what one has to do is to covet the best gifts, and work at them *coûte qui coûte?* But putting it into practice is quite a different thing, because then comes the resistance of flesh and blood. So that one is not necessarily unfaithful or inconsistent, because one falls short in act of very much that in desire one sees as clear as crystal."

To another: "One thing brought home to me in this retreat is the wonderfully gradual way in which we are brought on. We resolve to try, and say over and over again, 'This shall be the change of the right hand of the Most High;' and the strong impression of grace passes, and we seem to fall back, and be much as before—and yet we are not. Every one of these efforts and renewals has its results, and the next time we bud out, the buds are formed on old wood which the time before was itself a green bud. And it is necessary for our humility that it should be in this way, else we should be very devils of pride. Nothing prevents this so much as the sense we are forced to have of our own infidelity to grace, the long labour it takes to remedy a single defect. Pride would like to get rid of all defects in a minute; and God knows very well that is far better to let us lie under the rod of our own miseries, till some of the pride is chastened out of us.

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[1] Le Père P. Olivaint, S.J.: *Les Retraites Annuelles.*

[2] Fighting against.

"It is quite certain God has His special wish about each of us, and I think this is a very moving way in which to put before one what He requires of us. We can grant or we can refuse the wish of a friend. And how rude and unkind and odious it is, if, knowing what would give pleasure to any one we care for, we refuse it out of sloth and selfishness.

"We are having a nice retreat. This morning something came so very much to the point, that I looked about to see if everybody was there to hear (not thinking of yourself, you naughty Mother!). I beg your pardon, I was, and took it in; and, having swallowed it, wished my babes to do the same.

"In retreat and out of retreat I have thought of you, and nothing you have written has been without its interest to me; and I care for and love as much as ever your dear old soul, which is all right, depend upon it, in spite of *jecur*.[1]

"When one looks into the world and sees all in disorder and revolt, it does kindle the desire that here, in His own house at least, our Lord should be faithfully and earnestly served, not half and half. Let us begin and try, and, as Mother Margaret used to say, 'If you and I begin, that will be *two*.'"

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[1] Liver.

MISCELLANEOUS

"Why is suffering part of love? you ask. Because it is the only proof in this world that our love is not self-love. To love truly is to give ourselves for what we love. If we will not do this, self-love is uppermost: we only love for the pleasure we get to ourselves.

"To love is to suffer and to be ready to suffer. Not to be ready to suffer is to be selfish, and the selfish heart knows not what it is to love. Our Lord is the perfect model of love, and He perfectly and entirely gave and gives Himself once on the Cross, always and daily in the Holy Eucharist. No one can love as He loves. But we must love in that way or our love is selfishness. Our Lord, who had not a fibre of selfishness in Him, is Love itself."

"A happy Easter to you, and plenty of them, until the real eighth day comes of which Dom Gueranger talks, and we see the Figure standing on the shore in the early dawn of eternity; and, after toiling all night and catching nothing, cast our nets on the right side of the ship and drag them to His feet, full of big fishes, one hundred and fifty-three, and sit down with Him to the heavenly banquet.

"How nice that fish must have been which He got ready for His disciples to eat, that wonderful day by the Lake of Genesareth, and how beautiful that sparkling rosary of one hundred and fifty-three fishes must have looked! 50 + 50 + 50 + 3; threefold jubilee + three; that is as much as to say, 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord!'"

At the time she was writing the Life of S. Dominic, she would often talk of what was absorbing her mind, and writes—

"It consoles me to know that I have not bored you by talking about our Holy Father. I feared I might have. But whom should we love if we did not love our Father?

"I always think of Him as so sweet, so equable, so serene, so patient, so loving, and yet so detached; and then I think how like our dearest Mother Imelda was to Him in all that, 'the rose of patience,' 'the ivory of chastity,' pouring out 'the waters of wisdom,' 'all joyful of countenance,' all just like her!"

"Our Lord made a special revelation to S. Mechtilde about 'the tears and smiles of S. Dominic,' as both particularly dear to Him. Could anything be lovelier than that?"

In 1885, during the days of suspense when Bishop Ullathorne's life was hanging in the balance, she was engaged in making some improvements in the garden at Stone, and writes as follows:—

"No fresh news of our dear Bishop by either post. I try to persuade myself 'no news is good news.' . . . I don't know what I should have done these last three or four days if I had not had the 'fountain' to work at; I have expended all my sorrow and all my joy over it. I am sure I shall have reason to call it the 'child of many tears,' for a good many have flowed into it. It will be very pretty, though as yet far from finished. The water rises to a fair height, and I am vigorously planting the rocks with ferns and flowers. I get wet through, am dragged in by zealous friends, change my garments, escape from the hands of my friends, and begin again. They don't understand that digging and rolling stones about has just kept me going through all this suspense. . . . The Bishop has certainly had a power of prayer. At Bow four remained up till midnight saying the Rosary for him. What a blessing to be able to fly to that resource!"

This letter reveals what a triumph of grace over nature her habitual resignation was. By nature, no one was more unable to bear suspense, to be equable under the vicissitudes of feeling, and to wait in patience and endure than she was.

Once, when disappointed about an arrangement she wished to make, she wrote—

"Thank God, His Divine Will is too apparent in this trial to mistake; and His Will must not only be done, but loved, kissed, and given thanks for. So it is all right. Dame Nature growls and gives a terrible kick now and then; but even a kicking horse can be ridden, and I hope mine is not too old to learn. Besides, I know it is all right."

To one who had written to sympathise with her under suffering, she wrote—

"I am sure of your kind remembrance, for you know what suffering is. I hope it draws one nearer to God: certainly it drives the things of time and sense far away,, and makes 'God alone' a blessed reality.

"There is nothing so sweet as a morsel of self-sacrifice, and if we knew this secret we might always be swimming in delight.

"Our Lord brings joy out of sorrow, if only we have patience to wait and endure, not always an easy thing to impetuous *us*."

LETTERS OF CONSOLATION AND CONDOLENCE

In December 1880, to the great grief of the Community of S. Dominic's, one of their elder and most promising pupils died, an only child, and of a most sweet and endearing disposition. The intense sorrow of the parents, together with the generosity with which they made their sacrifice, pierced Mother Francis Raphael to the heart, and drew forth her deepest sympathy.

"Oh! how very near our hearts were brought together during that night of intense anguish," she wrote to the bereaved mother, "but let me also say how good God was to enable you both, at such a moment, to offer Him such a sacrifice ! If we were created to give Him glory here (as your dear child said in some of her last words), you surely had the grace given you at that time of rendering Him the glory of perfect abandonment ; and it should be a pledge and assurance to you of that bliss of future reunion with Him and in Him with all that is dear to you, which will satisfy your hearts to overflowing.

"Never will I cease to pray for you both, that God may put His own strength into your hearts and console you for all you have given Him. He knows how truly I can say, that, to spare you that anguish, I would gladly have died."

A few weeks later she wrote again—

"Take courage, my dear child, during these heavy painful days ; sad as they are, it is quite clear that God is supporting you ; and the more you lean your poor aching heart on Him, the more He will support you. I remember our dear Bishop once saying to me, that one of the great profits a soul makes in time of trial is the secret support of God ; that is over and above what is sensibly felt at the time, but which reveals itself afterwards in the strength which the soul gains, and in the blossoming of new virtues, the deeper comprehension of Divine truths, and above all the deeper hold on Divine love. For our gifts and our bereavements alike come to us in love ; and I suppose we hardly know how to love until we have learnt what it is to suffer.

"My prayer, therefore, for you, my dear child, and for your dear husband, is that your present suffering may produce a rich harvest of grace in your hearts."

A similar death in the school at an earlier date, reopened a deep wound in Mother Francis Raphael's heart, and she wrote thus to a friend—

"It is all right ; only just tell me how it is people can care a rush about the world. Never since my dear mother's death, twenty-eight years ago, have I lost the feeling that came when I saw her dear face in the coffin, and the world for the first time became a grave to me. After that, caring about it in any way seemed idiots' work."

To a Superioress, one of whose subjects was sick, she wrote—

"It is part of the Mother's office to have a mother's anxieties; then we may hope to have the mother's reward."

She fully carried this out in her own person; the sorrows of her children were truly her own, and always woke a chord of tenderest sympathy. But she had the profoundest sense of God's love working in trials; and her sympathy was always uplifting to the mourner.

To one suffering the saddest of sinless trials, the mental malady of a beloved friend, she wrote—

"What would I give to be able not only to wish you a happy feast to-day, but to make it one by pulling out the thorn from your dear suffering heart! But that is not what our Lord wills, who has put it there. I can but pray that the design of love which He has in it for you all may be perfectly accomplished. It is one of those moments when one's only resource is abandonment. May God enable you to take refuge in that best of all comforts, and to find in it the peace and security which is found in nothing else. I pray for you continually, and I could never tell you how much I feel for you.

"No doubt our Lord has meant us all to learn the lesson of detachment experimentally. I do not wish it different for myself, for I know beyond the power of words to express that for me everything has been for the best. And so I will hope it has been and will be for you. God loves us all as individuals, and chooses His strokes so as to touch each heart in the right place. The more our confidence in Him is blind, the more it has of faith and love. Your last trial is an acutely painful one, but think with thankfulness of his Christian preparation for it. . . . It ought to be enough to console you."

To one who had just lost her mother, she wrote—

" I trust, my dear child, that you will indeed be able to find in religion something still of the mother's care and the mother's love, to replace the dear tie that is gone. Trust me, I will do my best ; and no one can know better than I do what it is to lose the one dear mother of one's childhood—it is the loss of part of one's self. Still, after these blows have fallen, we feel in a sense more free ; nature has less hold upon us, and we are able more entirely to throw ourselves on God. . . . Your best comfort is the very thing which at this moment wrings your heart, the memory, that is, of how dear and sweet a mother she has been to you."

" It is true we can never have but one real mother, and I am sure now, looking back, that we never loved them a quarter as well as they loved us. I believe I something like idolised my own mother ; but all the same I often see and weep over the ways in which I was selfish, and she was the mirror of unselfishness, and think how it should not be so now if the time were to come again."

She closes a letter of sympathy to another under the like trial with the words—

" You have the happiness of thinking of her as a good Catholic, and of being able to help her with your faithful and pious prayers ; and to help the dear ones who go before us gives another meaning and intention to our lives."

The following letter was written to one who had just lost a sister after an intensely suffering illness :—

" You will feel as regards your sister, that these sufferings, so heart-rending to witness, have obtained for her graces that we cannot measure and an eternal weight of glory. Don't let your poor loving heart in its tender pity think that our Lord dealt hardly with her. Those whom He loves He makes conformed to His own sufferings, that He may draw them nearer to Himself. Could she speak to you now, she would tell you secrets of His love, which perhaps she would never have learnt without that taste of the terrible Cross."

To one suffering under family trials, she writes—

" This has been an upsetting year for you, and I have often thought of and prayed for you. But times of trial do their work in us and for us, though at the time we don't always feel it. They loosen us from self and the world, and throw us on God, as our only refuge, and friend, and helper. The one lesson of life is that all that is not God is nothing. Family ties, selfish interests, what are they all but emptiness and disappointments? But God never disappoints; and if we can but attain to simple trust in Him and heart to heart converse with Him, the troubles of life (of which you have so large a share) cease to disturb.

" This dear feast of the Assumption talks to us of the same thing. What were the Seven Dolours in Our Lady's memory when the moment of her endless bliss began? And all the fret, harass, and cross accidents which do so plague us here, how they will all flee away for us too, when we shut our eyes on this world and open them on the Face of the Beloved! Have courage then, and trust God *usque ad mortem*,[1] in spite of everything."

She was not without sympathy too for the minor trials of life; witness the two following letters to the Community at Stoke, after losing their Prioress at the end of her term of office:—

" As I am afraid the clouds hang thick o'er Stoka's camp just now, I think I had better address my letter to all of you, just to beg you all to cheer up, and remind you, as S. Teresa reminded one of her communities under like circumstances, that departing Prioresses do not take with them the key of the Tabernacle.

" I am bound, however, to have an extra stock of compassion for you all, from the fact that I never went through that particular trial myself. . . . But then you see I have experiences of my own, and among them is the very unpleasant one of having had to go about for the last month or so executing the last sentence on my Sisters.[1] Now I wonder who is most to be pitied—the sufferers or those who have to inflict the suffering ? I am inclined to think the latter, and plead for a little sympathy in my own case. It is so very much pleasanter to pour sunshine into one's little world, than to wrap it in the fog in which it has been enveloped for the last three days—a fog caused (as cannot be doubted) from the large prevalence of salt water in the immediate neighbourhood !

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[1] Even unto death.

" Now I hope to get a comforting report of you all, and shall do my very best to make you all square and comfortable before the Epiphany. Please therefore to help me with your prayers."

On the same subject she writes on another occasion—

" I know you will all be grieving to-day at parting with dear Mother Prioress ; and if I could be in two places at once, I would willingly be with you to cheer you up a little and encourage you. But the best of all encouragements is the cheerful resolve to do our duty, to make light of trials which come from natural feelings, and to resolve to go through with it all and cling to nothing but God and His holy will : and then all will be well. These are times when we become sensible of a fulness of meaning in the words, ' Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things shall be added unto you,' which they do not always seem to contain.

" God gives us many consolations and blessings. But we are to seek only Him and His justice. Then, if we do that bravely and resolutely, He adds ' all other things.'

" Now then, my dearest Sisters, let this be our spirit.

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[1] There had been various changes of offices about this time in all the houses.

It will increase our generosity and purity of intention. It will rouse up our fervour. Stir yourselves up to seek nothing but God, and be sure that all you need, all that will comfort your hearts, and help you to persevere and be happy, and united, and fervent in His service, 'shall be added unto you.' "

ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

[*To a Lady who was about to enter Religion*]

I. On Faith and Obedience

The first disposition a person requires on entering Religion is Faith.

We spend a certain time and care in examining, and submitting to examination, our vocation, and the particular form of religious life in which we are to try it. But when this is done, and we begin our real probation, we must enter on it with an act of Faith :

1st. In the wholly supernatural character of the life on which we enter, which we must not test and examine by any natural standard or preconceived notions of our own.

2ndly. In those who are appointed to guide and form us in religious life and habits. Not merely because, as superiors, they hold the place of God, but also in another more human way. They are experienced in a certain science which we come to learn. Most persons, in the beginning of their religious training, are conscious of disappointment at not being (as they suppose), handled in a sufficiently supernatural and spiritual way. They expect something very distinct and high to be done upon their souls, which is to change and reform them, and are mortified to find so much attention given to exterior habits, ways of walking, sitting, holding one's self, and the like. More than this ; many points of rule are enforced, which seem to have no meaning at all, and merely fidget us. If we set to work to judge them as unmeaning and silly, we are evidently going against the principle of Faith, and we must pull our minds round into the right attitude, by reminding ourselves that we are in the presence of a supernatural system, which is to be taught us by those who understand it, which, as yet, we do not. When a person puts herself under a music master, she learns not merely the rules of harmony, but fingering and the holding of the hand. Fingering is not music at all ; but no one will play well who neglects it.

So of religious life ; many things required of a novice are not, in themselves, spiritual life, but they help to it.

Over and above this, there is the immensely important principle, never to be lost sight of, that submission to trivial, and perhaps what seems unmeaning rules, should be given with all our strength, because, far more than submission in very important matters of obedience, they pulverise our judgment. Now, if any one of our powers and faculties requires pulling down and building up again on quite a fresh basis, it is our judgment. The submission of the will is, of course, vitally necessary ; but you will never thoroughly submit the will (*i.e.* practise obedience), till you have brought the judgment into subjection. And it is a most determined and absolute rebel, which you must resolve to treat by starvation.

Then again, pride feels correction, in trifles, more keenly than in things of moment, and pride is the chief enemy we have to overcome.

Another thing which bears on the same subject : S. Ignatius points out that over and above our sins and faults, we have, all of us, a mass of defects, to which he gives the name of *Inordinatio*. A great deal of novitiate training is directed against these. The word explains itself ; parts of our nature not yet brought into order, or under control and discipline—therefore, *dis*-orderly and inharmonious. The work of establishing order among them is exceedingly penitential at first, but, when established, it tends wonderfully to interior peace. Now interior peace is the citadel, which is approached through these outworks. I think you will see what I mean. Whatever you do, regard this side of discipline in the spirit of faith, and don't criticise it. Accept, and be docile to it, and "what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter."

II. On the Difficulties of Community Life

I have been thinking over what are likely to be your difficulties. Submission of judgment we have considered. Then there is the subject of Community Life and your companions.

It is not to be supposed but that in any Religious Community you must find many unsympathetic, and some, perhaps, absolutely distasteful to you. You are not quarrelsome, I know; but I am not sure that you will not feel it a great nuisance to live with people who may, some of them, "run into you," and you can't get out of their way.

I told you one secret of not stirring up one's little aversions, by getting into the habit of not looking at people who are disagreeable to you. But the real remedy is—like everything else in religion—supernatural.

In the first place, don't shrink from going down into the abyss of your own heart, and finding out, honestly, if, in your dislike (supposing you should feel one), there may not be a secret element of contempt. It is a horrid word, and stands for a horrid thing; but nine times out of ten, what repels us from people who are small, narrow, or silly, is not their defect, but our own contempt for it. Silliness does disgust, there is no doubt about it. Now, suppose you detect yourself entertaining such a feeling, how are you to manage it?

By, from the first, resolving to regard, not only your superiors, but your sisters, in a supernatural light. We may take it, I hope, for granted, that in a religious community, every one is in a state of grace. Have you ever seriously considered what that implies? It means that their souls are clothed with a supernatural beauty, compared with which neither heaven, nor earth, nor sea, nor flowers, nor jewels, nor anything the eye can behold, can stand for a moment. One degree of grace surpasses it all. Because the state of grace is only the prelude and beginning of the state of glory.

Perhaps these souls, who seem so silly, have never fallen from baptismal grace. If so, think of their exceeding whiteness, " as no fuller on earth could whiten them." Then consider your own soul, as you know it to be, and to have been. Very often, looking round on the community, when we are all assembled together, I think to myself, " Here are forty souls, *in a state of grace*, objects, therefore, of God's complacency and love; in the sight of the angels dazzling with beauty. Each one with her own angel by her side. What I have got to do, is to do reverence to them, one by one."

Do you remember the story of Palmerina in the Life of S. Catherine? Palmerina was a wicked old wretch, who had plagued and calumniated S. Catherine, and whom at last she converted and got to make a good death. Then she understood that Palmerina was in Purgatory, and she set to work to deliver her. At last our Lord showed her the soul of Palmerina released from Purgatory, and going up to heaven, clad in a glory so dazzling, she could not look at it. She had died in a state of grace. That was all. And our Lord said: " How thinkest thou, daughter? Was it not worth while suffering and praying to obtain the release of such a goodly and beautiful soul as this?" Goodly and beautiful! The old beldame, who had never given her a good word! But, *she had died in a state of grace*, thanks to S. Catherine, and that was enough.

Well, one meets with narrow people, perhaps silly people, perhaps, sometimes, unmannerly people, even in religion, people who, from one cause or another, are disagreeable to us. But they are not Palmerinas! Possibly they love God better than we, and have loved Him longer. Very likely indeed, they are incomparably more beautiful in His sight than we are. What a horrid thing, then, if I discover that I really have indulged for them a feeling of contempt!

Then, again, in some of the very characters that we are inclined to despise by reason of their apparent littleness, we come upon proofs of religious virtues, and the action of divine grace, which fill us with wonder and respect. The hidden virtues and perfections of disagreeable people often teach us a wonderful lesson of mutual respect, and teach us to be ashamed of ourselves. I have not the least doubt that some whom we may look upon as "good common-place sort of people," or "good in their way, but queer and eccentric,"—a little beneath ourselves in fact—are really, in God's sight, most glorious objects, and that if we could look at such now in heaven, they would surpass the sun in brightness.

And I am equally certain that if I examine myself, and find in my soul a thought of pride, self-value, and contempt of others, I shall see a great, ugly black blotch, which would spoil the beauty of the most beautiful face in the universe. For, one thing that Community Life, in its trials, certainly does, is to help us to find out things in ourselves we never before dreamt of. Persons who are used to the thought that they frankly own and deplore their manifold infirmities are often perfectly blind to many which they possess. Nay, even on the points where they think themselves most free, there is a fund of something which hides itself. Take vanity: suppose a person really free, in many respects, from this fault. She may take it for granted that she is not entirely free. The Bishop once said to me, "If there is any point where you think you are safe, take care to examine that particular thing, and you will be surprised at what you discover."

Community Life often inflicts these surprises upon us. We are, perhaps, in the disposition of judging women to be narrow, jealous, tiresome, trying—etc., etc.—and we discover in ourselves just some of these infirmities. They had not before been brought to the surface; that was all.

Well, I think this line of thought, worked in, so as to be the habitual position of your mind as regards others, in time furnishes the safeguard, and turns the trials of Community Life themselves into means of grace.

III. On Interior Trials

Dear . . .—It was a little curious your speaking of interior trials and disgusts, as I had been thinking of saying a word on that subject from my own experience. Of course, I do not know enough of your *very* interior to be able to forecast what is likely for you. But almost every one has such seasons. Some persons seem to live in alternations of hot and cold; I should doubt any to have a real contemplative vocation, who are not, sooner or later, obliged to pass through some of those deserts, which simply mean that nature is being stripped from them, and suffers.

But it is not so much of those extra-ordinary seasons that I want to speak just now, but of more ordinary trials of a season of weariness and disgust in prayer. Sometimes (indeed, very often) they come from our own fault; conscious distractions entertained, and wilful slothfulness. At other times, from brain-exhaustion, which means bad management of one's self; but whichever way they come, the following rules equally apply.

1. Don't take them as any sort of proof of your spiritual condition being good or bad; or, as showing you that God is displeased with you; or, in short, as symptoms on which you are to form any judgment at all

about yourself. You may, of course, very safely accept and use them as penances, but that is a different thing. In the main, regard them as a something—either a process in your spiritual formation, or a simple time of trial (like exterior trials)—through which you have to pass, and which it must be your chief concern to pass through in the right way, so as, first, to please God, Who permits it, and secondly, to get out of it the particular spiritual grace which it contains.

Here, then, are the conditions:

Courage; abound in hope and confidence. It is a passing trial. To sense it seems—well, I will put it strongly, but not too strongly—as if God were dead; as if He had, at any rate, done with you, abandoned you, given you up; as if He were miles and miles away, and would never come back; as if you were turned—not to a stone exactly, but to a mere animal thing, without intellect or will—nothing but the capacity of suffering.

If you tried to manifest your state in words, you would probably begin by saying; "I feel as if"—and I should stop you, and say, "That explains all. You *feel—as if*"—Not, "this is;" you know it is not; but the sensitive part of you "*feels* (mark the word) *as if*" —You will not dare to say, "God *is* dead; He *has* abandoned me; I *have* no will," and so on. You are exact to the letter when you say, "I feel as if"—and the reality is as much involved as when a lunatic says he feels he is a teapot.

God never abandons us; least of all when we suffer.

What must you do then? Pray.

"But that is just what I can't do."

Pardon me; you only "feel as if" you could not. We go on for days, possibly for weeks, yielding to that feeling, and so not praying, and so not getting relief. Horrible seasons of misery! At last our Lord moves you to make the effort. And the first time you compel yourself to say one "Our Father," as real prayer, things improve.

Now I want you to resolve, if these times come upon you, not to let the dreadful half-dead time of sloth go on. Use vocal prayer. I always think that those who speak disparagingly of vocal prayer must really be prompted by the devil. Let me feel an actual idiot—(and I have felt that), I can yet resolve to repeat slowly and determinately an Our Father, or an Act of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Never mind a straw if you feel no devotion in it. Don't you see that the thing that is being destroyed in you is that clinging to feeling, which is entirely of the flesh? Despise the feeling, and determine if you only have just now the power to say the words—*to say them*, not caring a button that they are nothing but words to you. God will accept the words. This alone will give you a certain amount of relief, because all spiritual sadness has in it a touch of spiritual sloth, and the effort by which you resist sloth will drive away some part of the misery.

But not all. There remains a weight, and a sense of isolation, and a thousand other miseries. Well, endure. There is a bad bit to be got through, and go through it with patience. On this subject the golden scripture is the 2nd chapter of Ecclesiasticus, which, if you do not know, get by heart. God wills you just now to suffer. Well, then, suffer. You can't do better. Suffer patiently, and, above all, suffer sweetly. Sweetly with others, driving away gloom and irritability. Be cheerful, not because you are in high spirits, which is the cheerfulness of nature, but with that higher kind of cheerfulness which is of the will, and is a most precious virtue. It can be done. People can endure an interior crucifixion, and be cheerful. I grant that flesh and blood rebel at the first effort, and that nature longs to satisfy itself with gloom; such a storm of resistance as devils raise; but you can compel it to yield; and that is just the spiritual combat of the moment.

We have got as far as Vocal Prayer persisted in;

Patient Endurance, and Cheerfulness. Now take a step higher. Don't merely endure, but turn it into love.

God has removed consolation from you. Did you deserve consolation? Did you seek it? Rather, ought you not to seek God alone? And if you are sincere in saying, "Yes, what I want, is GOD," remember this: God never changes. He is to-day what He was yesterday. If, to your flesh-and-blood sense, to-day He comes with a veil over His countenance and a scourge in His hand, He is God, just as much as though, to your mere feeling, He came as a Spouse and a Lover.

Keep on reminding yourself that what you want is God—nothing but God, and that you will keep hold of Him in the dark, no matter how He seems to be treating you, and no matter for how long.

Out of this comes that exquisite act of abandonment; "Do with me as You like, because You are my Master, because I belong to You; because I don't care for Your caresses, but only for *You.* The harder You treat me, the more I am resolved never to let You go." You will be able to say all this without a spark of sweetness, and when you have done so, you will get to real love.

Then: Sometimes the trial passes, and is succeeded by torrents of sweetness, but always when it passes you will find that it leaves a supernatural strength.

P.S.—In what I have said above about endurance, compare with what common sense would tell you of how a person should bear physical suffering. He must bear it. All he can do is, not to make fine meditations, but to endure patiently. Perhaps at times he cries out with pain, but that is not necessarily impatience. He goes on enduring; and he tries to bear sweetly.

In connection with this matter of bearing sweetly, I will just add that there is a danger in times of interior trial of being selfish, wrapt up in self-pity, and so, forgetful of others. Well, if you try and go the other way, and at such times make efforts to be kind to other people, and show them a little extra attention, you get wonderful help out of it for yourself.

We now come to the series of touchingly affectionate letters written from her death-bed to her absent children. She made an effort to send at least a few pencilled lines to each one, of which the following may serve as samples. The first was addressed to one who was suffering a good deal from family troubles.

"I have indeed felt for you during all these troubles and anxieties. I am trying to write to all my Sisters in all the houses, that all may be assured of my love and remembrance before I pass away. Not that I anticipate this at present; the doctor thinks the present state of things may go on for months—a terrible prospect for poor nature; but I am trying to bring myself to it, if such be God's will. I cannot deny that it is great suffering: yet our Lord is so merciful and sends so many sweet blessings mingled with the bitterness, that I have more cause for thanksgiving than anything else.

"I doubt not He has comforted and supported you also; surely if there is one thing more than another one desires to say before departing, it is 'How good God is!' I feel sometimes as though He were spoiling me, when I compare myself and all the care and tenderness I get, with so many poor creatures who have not a soul to care for them. . . . In fact, I get everything heart or soul could desire, and feel I ought to spend my time in acts of love and thanksgiving.

"Now, dear Sister, I must say adieu. You have your trials and I have mine. Let them all work out patience and love, and all will be well.

"I never forget you, and try to commend you to our Lord in all my twinges of pain. Pray that I may have true contrition, final perseverance, and the grace of a happy death."

"*February* 6, 1894.

"Yes, I would indeed see you all, and say all that is in my heart, instead of writing. All I can do is to say it to our Lord; so I have put up an additional text on to my curtains, recommending you all to Him, as S Catherine recommended all her children with her last breath. I would indeed do so, asking Him to bless and love you all and return you a hundredfold for all the affection you have ever shown to me, who deserved it so little.

"But, my dearest, continue to pay to all your Mothers the same loyal love, and you will receive an abundant reward. With all my heart I would help, if I could, to bind you all together in the ties of love and charity, knowing full well how sweet a return they will secure."

"*February* 7, 1894.

"I have little to say within the four corners of my bed, where it would be delightful to persuade myself that—

'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
Bless the bed that I lie on.'

The thorns just now are pretty sharp; but Lancisius says one ounce of the Cross is better than ten pounds of prayer; so I will try and make the best of my ounce.

"Pray for your old Mother that in time she may get some of her nature beaten out of her, and a little love of God beaten in."

Her farewell to a young Sister, who had come in infancy to the convent School, and in whose education she had taken great interest, was as follows:—

"*February* 8, 1894.

"I write to you once more to send you a little greeting from your old Mother, who loves nothing better than to remember all her old children and commend them to God, calling to mind the many happy days they spent together when both were younger.

"Well, dear child, those days were happy because they were innocent. All your life lay before you, with no plans or desires, save the one desire of belonging to God; and now He has granted that desire and made you His, is not that enough? You will indeed think so when you are lying on your death-bed, as I am. 'Give me Thy grace and Thy love, and it is enough, and I will ask for nothing more.'

"You have served Him and loved Him in obedience since you took your holy vows, and what more can any soul desire?"

A fortnight before she died she wrote—

"*April* 13, 1894.

"Thanks for your dear affectionate note. You do not and cannot know the happiness it gives me to feel your loving grateful hearts pouring out their sense of gratitude, though indeed there is so little to be grateful for. I have had the best of children, and I should have been more than a wretch if I had not loved them.

"Now then, dear child, I have but one thing to say: cling to love—love of God and of the Community. If I could leave that as my legacy, I should be content. Think of our Lord as the One Supreme Good, the only Beauty; and what deserves our love but Good and Beauty? We give our love to our Divine Lord, because He is the perfect Humanity knit to God and given to us—ours. What else is there—can there be worth loving? So then give yourself to Him as His true spouse. Do all your work for His Love, and it will all be sweet to you. The souls for whom you work are His children and yours. Love them as such, and you will never feel weary of their care; for you will always feel their true mother, and motherhood feels no weariness.

"And then aim at simplicity. Possibly it is what you need. Ask our Lord to make you understand what it means, for it is not easy to define ; but he will make it clear to you : a mixture of humility and sincerity ; and it would do everything for you.

" God bless you. I can't write more."

At the time of the Provincial Chapter, when her successor was elected, she wrote--

" *April* 16, 1894.

" I take the greatest interest in all the doings of the Chapter, and concur in all its acts.

" They have been so good as to give me a vote of thanks for my services during the last forty years. Very kind, and I own it has given me a pleasure which I hope is not vain.

" I have tried to serve the Congregation, because I loved it. Try and do the same. The more you care for the Congregation, the less selfish you will grow and the more you will identify yourself with the common good. . . . . I am reading again the Life of our Holy Mother S. Catherine, and wish I were a true daughter. God bless you. Your devoted Mother,

M. F. RAPHAEL."

It is true that " Love has but one word, but never repeats itself." We may venture to hope these farewell letters will not be found wearisome.

II. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE DIFFERENT CONVENTS OF THE CONGREGATION, ON OCCASION OF THE CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

THE feast of the Immaculate Conception, being the anniversary of the profession of Mother Margaret and her first companions, is always celebrated in the Congregation with great solemnity: and, although the vows taken by the Sisters are perpetual, it is their custom to renew them in common on this day. The devotion of the *Quarant' Ore*, or Forty Hours' Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, also takes place in their churches about this time of the year, whenever possible.

Mother Francis Raphael writes, on occasion of this festival, on December 7, 1883—

"There is one thought which always occurs to me as connected with the Immaculate Conception. It seems to inspire one with such joy to think God has had one human soul all His own—realising completely the idea of a creature faithful to its Creator. No doubt, in creating us each one, there was an idea of perfection which He desired each one of us to embody and carry out, and we have each one fallen short of it. Only our Blessed Lady has perfectly fulfilled the idea and design of her Creator. And so we, imperfect, faulty creatures, who must be disappointments, as it were, are bound to rejoice and give thanks that one, at least, has given this joy to her Creator.

"Suppose we carry this thought a little further and imagine to ourselves that, in ordaining other things, such as the priesthood, religious life, and religious communities, Almighty God had in His eternal mind beautiful types, which we very poorly and inadequately realise. Imagine, if you like, for instance, what must be the type in the mind of God, the perfect ideal of a religious community. It would be a family in which the natural ties of flesh and blood would be supplied by the supernatural ties of union with Christ : Christ Himself as the Superior would be the Head, and all would see Him, serve, and obey Him as the Head. Christ would be in each member, and all would feel knit in one, just as the different members make one body. There would be eye, and hand, and foot, all helping and working one with another, for a common end and a common interest. As S. Paul says, 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, that there may be no schism in the body.' No jealousies, or divisions, or separate spirit, or anything that could wound or keep the members apart, would exist. We should not all be perfect, but we should bear one another's imperfections, and so these imperfections would only be a greater provocation of Divine charity. We should not be without crosses and difficulties, external and internal ; but then everybody would be ready to sympathise and help us to carry our cross, and make it lighter for us, and so in the cross there would be, even humanly speaking, a wonderful infusion of sweetness. We should not all be doing the same work, because we have different capacities and different duties ; but everybody would care for everybody's work, because though the *opera*,[1] the employments, that is, might vary, the *opus*, the Divine work, would be one and the same.

"I think we should all gain something, if we tried thus to picture to ourselves what Almighty God designed by calling us all out of the world and making us into a religious community. And that divine, beautiful something He certainly gives us the grace to realise, if we will but make it our aim.

"And so in this bad world, which was once illuminated and made fragrant by being the dwelling-place of one immaculate and faithful soul, there would spring up so many little gardens fragrant with the sweet odour of Paradise; something would be conquered back from the dominion of the world, and made to be more entirely and exclusively 'the kingdom of God and of His Christ.'"

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[1] A reference to the prayer said daily in the Divine Office at the *Pretiosa*, after the reading of the Martyrology.

"The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is the birthday of the Congregation, and therefore the beginning of a long chain of graces for each one of us, including as it does our own vocation.

"It should be to us a festival of unmixed thanksgiving; not only on account of all that we have received through the hands of our Heavenly Mother, but also because of the joy and glory that redound to Almighty God in the possession of at least one creature who is and ever has been all His own. On her He can look with unmixed favour. The enemy has had no part in her; she is a gem in His crown that has no flaw, a flower in His garden on whose snowy petals there rests no stain.

"One of the humiliations of this life is to find nothing perfect in it—no soul without its weakness; no history which has always been an upward growth. There are always limitations and infirmities, something even in the best and holiest, which we have to bear with and forgive.

"But in thinking of our Blessed Lady we are able to rest our hearts on a spotless ideal, which yet is the most real of human existences. It is not merely a beautiful imagination, like a poem or a work of art. By giving her to us to be our Mother, her Divine Son has so ordered things, that she is in closer and more real relations with us than any other creature, for there can be no tie so close as that of mother and child.

"Now this all pure and spotless Mother, in whom sin has absolutely no part, is at the same time the Refuge of Sinners. She reflects in a peculiar way, and by a peculiar privilege, the boundless compassion of God.

The Saints are saints only in so far as they are like God; and the more they are like Him, the greater is their sanctity. But none are so like Him as those whose hearts are full of compassion for sinners. This is the great and distinguishing feature in the character of all the great servants of God. They do not judge, they do not hold themselves apart, they do not despair of sinners. They are their advocates and their servants. They are ready to live and die, as their Master lived and died, for their salvation. 'Jesus Christ,' says the Apostle, 'came into the world to save sinners;' and, this being so, His servants must do the same. Surely the spouses of Christ should in some sort be regarded as the refuge of sinners. They should be like their Mother in her wonderful tenderness for weak and wandering souls. How many souls may be saved by only the caring for them! How many would seem to be lost, because they feel there is none to care for them. I beg of you, therefore, my dear Sisters, to honour our Immaculate Mother by an imitation of this boundless compassion of hers for the sinful and the miserable Let all such confidently come to us for help and pity. Never give up a soul. Never think you have done enough for them. Never measure your devotion by their gratitude. Never set yourselves any other model or example in dealing with souls than the example of God Himself and His Immaculate Mother. Just as He has committed to her the ministry of mercy and loving-kindness, consider that He has done something the same for His Spouses. He does not ask justice of them, but charity and long-suffering, and that true *misericordia*, which really means having a heart for the miserable.

"May our dear Lady obtain this grace for us; so that, as we cannot imitate her in her one great privilege of being exempt from sin, we may yet become like her in her boundless compassion."

"I sometimes wonder what our Lady can think of us;

we take so many loving liberties with her: we quite confidently expect that she will hear all our prayers and discharge all our commissions: but, after a little reflection on what is implied by all her privileges, it is a real wonder that she consents to have anything to do with us. Of course what explains it is that she is a huge Vessel of Compassion. It is her characteristic, as it was that of her Divine Son, all whose perfections she reflects. It was one of His own favourite words. 'I have compassion on the multitude.' When he saw the widow of Naim, 'He had compassion on her.' Again and again the Gospels give as the reason for His working His wonderful miracles, that 'He was moved with compassion.' And this stands out as one of His great, adorable perfections, just because it is one of the most adorable of God's attributes. . . . I do not think we require the testimony of Holy Scripture to prove to us that God is full of compassion. We have enough proof of it in our personal experience. Where should we all be, and what should we all be, if it were not so?

"But yet I doubt if we have ever sounded to the depths all the mysteries of the Divine compassion. It is the key to all the dispensations, whether of nature or grace, itself being without a key; for we can never explain to sense, or reason why God loves us thus to excess. But He does; and we know it. There is a common saying, 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Consider what it implies. The winds are His mighty messengers. They blow from one end of the world to the other, purifying the air and performing His will; and in the corner of some field there lies a poor little lamb that has had its fleece cut off and is shivering in the cold blast; and God is represented as commanding His mighty winds to blow more gently as they pass that corner, lest the lamb should be hurt. It is His little creature. So He has thought and care for it, and recommends it to His angels. This is His compassion. . . . He does not let us be tried beyond our strength : He supplies a remedy for all our troubles. He is ready to interpose something to shield us from every blast.

"I do not think there is anything which does our heart more good than to meditate a little on the compassion of God, of our Divine Lord, and of His Blessed Mother. And it is just one of those things in which we must imitate them. It is the point of the parable of the servant who would not forgive his fellow-servant a hundred pence, when his lord had had compassion on him and forgiven him ten thousand talents. S. Peter tells us not only to be of one mind, but to be 'having compassion one of another,' [1] not merely to be compassionate to the poor and the sick, those whom we visit, or find begging at our doors, but compassionate one to another. . . . We say of our Lord in the 44th Psalm, that 'Grace was poured abroad on His lips,' that is, His speech, His words ; and, in the same Psalm, of His Spouse it is said that 'All the glory of the King's daughter is within' —*ab intus*. She is so full of love and grace within, that from within it shines forth exteriorly in her words and acts. And we must not be content with having love in our hearts for our Sisters ; we must have it in our words, our looks, and our gracious manners. When we say we can't work with one or get on with another—that one is so trying and another so irritating, all would be remedied with a little more compassion, that is, forbearance, pity for each other's defects and infirmities, toleration, and patience.

"Depend upon it, our Lord will take the part of those we cannot get on with. It is a hopeless business going to Him with complaints of other people. He always takes the part of those complained of. He took the part of S. Mary Magdalen when S. Martha complained of her. He took the part of His disciples when the Pharisees asked Him how He could let them do what it was not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day, *i.e.*, eating the ears of corn. He did not argue that it was lawful, but He shielded them. He said they were hungry. He was always making excuses for tiresome people and weak souls, and even sinful ones. And once, when He had nothing to say, no excuse to offer for such a one, He made as if He did not hear her accusers, but stooped down and wrote on the ground.

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[1] 1 Peter iii. 8

"Well, here is a lovely example. We cannot imitate Him in His miracles, but in His Divine compassion we can and we must. There is something so inconsistent in calling ourselves children of Mary, if we have no sort of resemblance to our Mother. And yet, if she could just take her place for a month in a religious community, she would turn it into a heaven on earth, simply by the daily exercise of that loving compassion which would make her tender, pitiful, courteous, long-suffering, and tolerant with the least of God's creatures with whom she lived.

"Let us ask her to teach us all the sweetness of charity, and then the enclosed garden of our convent will bud forth new blossoms fragrant with the odours of Paradise."

CHRISTMAS

"This sweetest of all feasts seems to blend this world and the next, and the thought of our earthly home with all its memories with that of another and better home which will be ours, 'eternal in the heavens.'

"There is this double character in all the mysteries of the Incarnation. It is hard to say which most touches our hearts: to look at the Divine Infant in His human beauty and littleness, and remind ourselves that He is the Lord of heaven and earth; or to think of Him as God, the Eternal Word creating all things by the word of His power, and then to contemplate Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger. So too in all the Sacraments we behold the same union of two things in themselves so contrary, Divine power and an infirm human element and minister. So even in ourselves, we see the weak creature of dust and ashes into whom the Spirit of God has breathed immortal life, and made it, by Divine grace, 'partaker of the Divine nature'; and this human life of ours, which passes on day by day, so humbly and so meanly, so taken up with poor little duties, is in another point of view our probation for heaven, the trial on which hangs our exceeding great reward. This thought is one capable of bringing to all of us much comfort and encouragement. Let us try and get the grace, as we would have gazed at the poor manger, and have beheld our God Incarnate, so to contemplate our daily work or daily denials, our daily pains of soul or body, in themselves so mean and little, as transformed into what is supernatural and Divine, and which is certain to purchase for us a supernatural reward. Nothing is so great, so sublime, so supernatural, as a human soul accomplishing its life-history in the grace of God, be that soul and that life that of the sweeper of a street-crossing or an emperor on his throne.

"Therefore let us not merely endure and drag on our lives, but live them with joy and a sort of reverence, as precious and sublime things, if only we are careful to embalm them all in the spirit of Divine grace, which transmutes all it touches into gold.

"When shall we learn the thousandth part of what is taught us by the great mystery of the Incarnation? A large portion of the world rejects that sacred mystery, because it cannot believe in what seems opposed to reason, just as in a like way it rejects the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament. To us who have the gift of faith, it is not the miracle of either mystery which staggers us: it is the depth of God's condescension. When, during the Forty Hours we kneel before the altar and gaze at Him enthroned there all God, all Man, hidden under the whiteness of a little piece of bread, it is not the wonderfulness of the miracle which surprises us, but the far greater wonder that Almighty God should deign to lower Himself for us. And so, when we pay our homage before the new-born and Divine Infant, what fills our heart with wonder is to think that God should take on Himself a created nature, and come down from heaven : *Descendit de cœlis*. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven and was made man. Well may we be taught to pause at these words and kneel in adoration. They express two things, an infinite humility and an infinite love. When we grasp all that is implied in those two words, we shall understand what is taught by the Incarnation. How then can it ever be that the practice of either of these virtues should be hard to those who are the disciples of the Son of God, made Man for us ! If we want to repay Him for such love, it must be in these two coins, on which are stamped His own image and likeness. He has not put His likeness on power, or intellect, or miraculous gifts, only on humility and love. Our holy father S. Dominic is said by a constant tradition to have been the living resemblance of our Divine Lord. S. Catherine of Siena said he was so, even in the exterior and far more in the interior. Now do you know what the one word is that all his companions repeated about him, more than any other ? 'Never did I know a man so humble !' they said. He worked miracles ; he raised men from the dead : he was a great teacher, the doctor of truth. All that did not make him like his Lord : but he was the humblest of all men, and 'he took all men into the embrace of his vast charity' ; and in these two virtues he found the perfection of his likeness to Jesus Christ.

"Is it not therefore a thing over which we ought to shed bitter tears, to feel that what we find it hardest to practise is the humility which would make us like our Lord, and the love without which we might give our bodies to be burned and it would profit us nothing ; that it is so hard for us to accept a humiliation, or a little wound to our self-love, when we say every day that for us 'He descended from heaven,' and when these things we shrink from so much are just those which would make us like our Lord?"

"I know Christmas is a busy time with you, and that you have to spend your holiday-time in making pleasant and cheering hours for other people, perhaps at some little sacrifice to your own; but I do not doubt that you have found out by this time that what we give to others is no real loss to ourselves, and that there is always a quiet corner in our hearts, where we may build our little crib, and worship there in quiet recollection.

"It is certainly very singular, that, every year as Christmas comes round, we do not seem to be celebrating a past event, so much as taking part in scenes that are actually present. It is the same with Holy Week and Easter, when we really feel as if we were in the upper chamber at the washing of the feet, or watching with our Divine Lord in the Garden of Olives. It is that all these sacred mysteries are eternal mysteries. Our Lord is the Eternal Child, as S. Catherine calls the Precious Blood also eternal. It is not therefore mere imagination that makes us realise that wonderful hour 'when all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of its course, and when the Almighty Word leapt down from heaven.'[1] We are on the hills with the shepherds; we feel that 'honeyed sweetness' which the office of Christmas says was that night 'poured over the whole world.' Then we see the lovely company of the angels, and join them in their *Gloria*, and we go with the shepherds to Bethlehem, to find the Child and His Mother and to pay Him the homage of our love. I suppose it is the Divine Office which brings all this so close to us, and makes all these beautiful mysteries so present to our hearts.

"So let us all join the angels in singing, 'Glory to God;

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[1] Wisd. xviii. 14, 15.

peace on earth to men of good will!' Beautiful words, which whisper a lesson we must never forget. There is no peace except to those of good will. And good will, the will that is united to God's will, will find peace surely and everywhere. What gift or blessing can compare to peace? It was the word in which our Lord conveyed His own blessing: *Pax vobis.* It is the gift we ask from Him, the Lamb of God: *Dona nobis pacem.* It is the one great longing of all our hearts—better than joy, at least in this life; it is another word for happiness, as far as mortals can possess happiness. 'The peace of God which passes all understanding.'"

"May you receive an ever-increasing love of the Divine Word made flesh, springing out of an ever-deepening faith in Him, in all that He is, and all that He had done for us, 'all peace and joy in believing.' These are S. Paul's words, and they seem to me to fit into our Christmas good wishes better than any: 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost.'[1] They tell us where we are to look for peace and joy, that these sweet and precious gifts are to be the fruits of faith. And, if there is one time more than another when we are called on to exercise faith, it is now, when we have our hearts and minds full of the thought of the Word Incarnate. Oh, how happy we are to believe in Him, and to believe with the simplicity of children, 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith!'[2] The world is very clever, and full of views, and reasonings, and theories, and new lights; and we have nothing but simple faith, and with it we overcome the world; and it fills us with all joy, and peace, and confidence, and hope. For we must remember that all our faith is rooted in this one great fact of the Incarnation. It made up the revelation of the first promise given to our first parents, and it has made up the creed of the Church ever since.

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[1] Rom. xv. 13.

[2] 1 John v. 4.

All the rest—Sacraments, grace, the Holy Eucharist—all are but developments of this one truth. No wonder then that the words which declare our faith are treated as more sacred than other words, and we kneel in pronouncing them, and rejoice to think that God has given us the inestimable gift which surpasses every other gift in His power to give.

"He has in His goodness placed us in an enclosed garden, into which the breath of the world scarcely penetrates. He has enriched our lives with an abundance of all the treasures that belong to faith, so that we do not only possess, but we abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost. You hardly guess the condition to which loss of faith is reducing the poor world which glories in its culture and has lost the only light to guide it. Only this much you ought to know, that there lies on us the duty of doing all we can to repair the injured glory of God by fervent acts of faith, and of never losing an opportunity of planting in the hearts of those with whom we have to do the faith once delivered to the Saints. It is one of our great privileges that we have opportunities of doing this in virtue of our religious vocation. If you get a little weary sometimes of teaching little children to make the sign of the cross and say their prayers, try and realise that you are doing the greatest work a creature can do, when you are planting the seeds of faith in the heart of a child. You are giving it the weapon with which it will 'overcome the world.' You are, as far as you can, extending the Kingdom of God. Satan and the world are up in arms, fighting day and night against that kingdom; and you are also in arms, defending it. Even if for a time you are beaten, and defeated, and crushed to death, would it not yet be worth everything to die in defence of the one rightful King!

"Some of you may remember the story of Abdiel, whom Milton describes as the only one of Lucifer's followers who remained true to God:—

'Faithful found among the faithless,
Faithful only he.'

"Let us embrace the part of Abdiel; and, remaining faithful unto death, receive from the God of hope the crown of life everlasting!"

ON RENEWAL OF FERVOUR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR

"*January* 8, 1886.

"Now that the holidays are coming to a close and we are about to begin a new working year, I hope we shall all do so with fresh courage and devotedness. The meaning of 'recreation' is, to re-create, that is, to give us cheerfulness and vigour to begin a new spell of life. And, indeed, a new spell of life has been given us. As we grow older, we feel more and more how every year and day and hour is a new gift from God. I don't think we realise this so much when we are young. Then we busy ourselves planning and dreaming about the future and what we shall do with the thirty or forty years which seem to lie before us. We should like to live noble, beautiful, and useful lives, and to do much for God and for souls. Such dreams are generous and suitable to the time, but they are not always profitable. Anyhow, as we grow older and verge on our fifty or sixty years, life takes another aspect. It would be silly to plan for a great or a long future. All we can do, then, is to take our days from God's hand, one by one, and do our best with them singly. It is a sort of surprise and motive for thankfulness to awake another morning and feel still in health, still in possession of our powers, and of life and time to use it. *Per singulos dies benedicimus Te!* 'Day by day we bless Thee;' and instead of fine dreams of noble deeds, we come to see that the really great things are accomplished by those who plod on along the one straight furrow of daily life, dropping in the single little seed of daily duty. This is what the Saints did: they never seem to have made plans; they just did the good work that came to hand, whether it were big or little, difficult or easy. Such a life, as it passes, implies drudgery, perseverance in what is wearisome and small and uninteresting. For, though story-books would represent the care of children and the service of the poor to be full of pleasant romances, the reality of such things is drudgery.

"But what it fashions at last is a noble life, with an everlasting reward.

"Now, then, my dear Sisters, let us try and get into the mood which will thus take life, day by day, from God's hands, and fulfil the daily duty. Drop in your single seed, and in time the whole field will be sown, the golden ears will spring up, and the harvest will be carried home, rejoicing. And do not suppose that it is only those who work in schools and hospitals who in that day will find their sheaves. Those also who work for the Community will carry a beautiful golden sheaf of charity, made up of many ears and many tiny seeds of kind acts, and kind words, and unselfish ways, and quiet devotedness. Such seeds are sown in holiday-time as well as in work hours. For my part, I believe our guardian angels are never busier or better pleased than when they bring us all together at recreation and put it into each one's heart to try and express one to another that we are happy together, that we are content with the sunshine of our own convent home, which brings back to us the innocence and light-heartedness of childhood. I have had many consolations this Christmas, but none greater than to see how such things find their way to hearts and cheer them on, by making them feel that they are all cared for by their mothers and sisters.

"So now, courage! Time will not stand still. Whether we will or no, the word is always 'Forward!' We are nearer the end than we were on Advent Sunday, nearer than when I began this letter; nearer, that is, to eternity and the vision of God. Ten golden minutes have passed whilst I have been writing—minutes long enough in which to make acts of love, and hope, and reparation, which, if God gave us the grace, might atone for a life's neglect. May we all learn the secret of amassing such minutes, and giving them all to God, that we may 'gather up the broken fragments that remain' of our poor little lives, so that 'nothing be lost' for ever!" . . .

"The precise thing to which God calls us every day is 'newness of life.' How often, every day, do we pray for it, saying, '*Spiritum rectum innova in nobis*'? We asked it yesterday; we ask it again to-day, 'Renew a right spirit within us': as though we felt that what we want is a daily conversion, a daily new creation, clearing away the follies of yesterday and preparing the better way of to-day.

"He Himself begins the year with an act of devotedness. He gives us as our New Year's gift the first drops of His most precious blood. We cannot give Him blood for blood, but we can give Him devotedness, more devotedness in our service of Him, in our daily work, in our love of souls, in our patience one with another, in our prayers, in our sacrifices, in our continued offering of ourselves. I am sure, if we were less sluggish and self-seeking in our service, we should soon see what wonderful blessings He would pour out upon devoted souls. Let us all unite in asking this as the special grace for the New Year, that this may be the 'right spirit' He will renew in all our hearts."

"*December* 30, 1888.

"I have been doing my best, during this beautiful Adoration Day, to pray that our Lord would give us all some precious New-Year's gift. And what I have felt compelled to ask for is, that we may all have an immense increase in the gift of faith. It is not an age of faith for the poor world outside: heresy and infidelity are having it all their own way. But that is no reason why, inside our 'enclosed garden,' into which the world and its horrid spirit ought never to set foot, we should not breathe all day long the pure, sweet atmosphere of faith. It should be an age of faith to us, at any rate. We ought not to find it difficult to live in God's presence, to discern Him and His will in whatever happens, to feel our angels very close to us, to be prepared for answers to prayer and supernatural warnings and corrections, and look on them as nothing extraordinary. We ought habitually to regard the things of sense and time as not to be weighed, or measured, or so much as named with those of eternity. We ought to be full of prayer, to feel that there is no privilege and no joy compared with that of being suffered to pray. We should feel the half-hour during which we assist at Holy Mass as little short of standing at the gate of heaven, and not be greatly surprised if we caught glimpses of the angel's wings, as they stand round the altar. And we should feel about souls and the Church of God something of what S. Dominic and S. Catherine felt, that we could die for them; and, if that may not be, that at least we will live and suffer for them to the best of our power."

ON PREPARATION FOR LENT

"The Mind of Christ."

"*March* 4, 1886.

"MY VERY DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,—Finding ourselves, as we do, on the threshold of another Lent, there is not one among us, I feel sure, who is not full of the desire to spend it well and holily, and full of gratitude to God for giving us yet one more season of grace, a Lent, a Jubilee, a Passion-tide—all full of spiritual benedictions—fresh gifts from God to draw us nearer to Himself.

"I know, to begin with, that you would all wish, if it were possible, to keep the rule to the letter, without dispensation. If, with any of you, this be not possible, nevertheless you will all do your best and trust the judgment of Superiors, who know and feel their responsibility in this matter, to decide for you if dispensations are necessary.

" The rule of fasting and abstinence, important as it is, is not, however, the whole of Lent. Why do we fast at all ? The Catechism answers that it is ' to mortify the flesh, and to satisfy God for our sins.' This then, is our Lenten work. This is what we have got to do, whether by fasting or in some other way. It would be a sort of Pharisaism if we were to keep the whole rule, and did not mortify ourselves. I was very much struck in my own conscience the other day, when reading over the Capitulum for the Feast of the Passion : ' Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.' And what was that mind ? ' He annihilated Himself ' (or ' emptied Himself,' as it may also be translated), and became a servant and was ' obedient—to death ; even the death of the Cross.' Here is the ' mind of Christ.' Here is the pattern set before us at the beginning of Lent—self-annihilation—the making ourselves nothing ; the spirit of lowly service to our brethren ; obedience, and obedience to death ; that is, mortifying obedience ; obedience in things that put nature to death, and that in most painful ways, the death of the cross. This is the ' mind of Christ,' and this is the mind which the Apostle says must be in us ; and this is the voice of the Church, in her office, speaking to us on the threshold of Lent.

" Any exercises, therefore, which we plan out for ourselves during this holy time must have in them, if we want to do the real work of Lent, this spirit of true mortification. And remember that mortification is something that contradicts and opposes our natural humours and inclinations, and that it demands of us a certain pliability in doing what we have no natural liking to do, and giving up things which we do like to do, and contradicting ourselves and being contradicted, in continually saying 'no' to ourselves. If, therefore, for any reason, we cannot do as much in the way of fasting and abstinence as we should wish, nothing will excuse us from labouring to have 'the mind of Christ' by conquering our self-will and silencing our self-judgment.

"And now, by way of making one suggestion, which may be of practical use, I would recommend you to study and meditate on one passage in our Holy Rule, which gives us a plain standard of perfection. 'It is written of charity,' says S. Augustin, 'that it seeketh not its own, which means that charity prefers the general good to its own, not its own to the general good. And thus, the more we study the advantage of the Community in preference to our own, the more we may know that we advance in perfection.'

"Here is a test by which we may try ourselves. Before this test, all repugnances, all likes and dislikes, all disposing of ourselves, of our acts and our time, everything of the private spirit, as opposed to the general spirit of the Community to which God has called us, must disappear. I am quite sure that we cannot overstate this truth. Perhaps we do not often enough reflect upon and admire, and give thanks to God, for having marked our lives with a distinct supernatural sign of His election and good will, in giving us a particular vocation. We did not so much choose Him, as He chose us. Religious life is a supernatural world. All communities are instinct with a certain life-blood, a supernatural life, which will be fresh and vigorous in proportion as all their members partake of the spirit of the community. To separate from it is the first step to spiritual delusion, and has about it the malaria of schism. S. Jude, in speaking of the terrible evils of the latter days, marks as one of their features the spirit of separation. What I mean is, that, if we desire to have the full tide of this supernatural life flowing through our veins, it will not be by carrying out private views or cherishing private inclinations and private repugnances, but by a generous mortification of all these things, which are of our very inner selves, and by a subjection of our hearts and wills to that special order of godliness which we shall find in the life of the Community. For example, who does not feel that to take our turn in certain duties which oblige us to be occasionally out of choir—serving in the infirmary or the kitchen, or keeping recreation with children, or whatever it may be, is a sacrifice of inclination ? Most religious would prefer missing no hour in choir and being regular to every exercise. But, if it is duty which calls us away, and the work and good of the Community demand it, we should make this sacrifice ungrudgingly and fear no spiritual loss ensuing to ourselves. 'The mind of Christ' reproduced in ourselves implies a certain sweet serviceableness. He took on Himself 'the form of a servant'—and an alacrity in rendering such service, not a grudging reluctance, in short, a loving preference of 'the general good to its own, not its own to the general good.'

" I do not say this as thinking there is any other spirit among us. I am sure the example of all our elder sisters has ever held this beautiful truth before us ; but we must try and keep their traditions bright and untarnished : and it will only be by imitating their self-devotion, their unselfishness, and the absolute simplicity of heart with which they have upheld authority and lived for the common good, that, as they who have been the pillars of the Congregation pass away, their places and their work will be filled by the younger generation. Only let us ask ourselves in all this, how much of real, solid mortification must there not have been, and examine ourselves well if the same spirit is in our own hearts and lives. And, if we find any defect in this matter, we may be sure that, by throwing our hearts more open to this form of mortification, we shall be entering upon a safe and certain way of perfection.

"In communities like ours there are many special opportunities for cultivating an unselfish spirit. We follow different works, and at times the temptation of caring for and providing for our own work and being indifferent to that of others, may often present itself. The acts by which we may mortify ourselves in this matter and show a helpful charity to others are in themselves very small and insignificant; but, if we hive them up, they will yield an abundant fruit of sweetness and charity; and the more of this there is in a community, the more there will be of that fragrance, that 'good odour,' which indicates the presence of Christ among us and of His Spirit. We sometimes puzzle ourselves a good deal as to how to lead an interior life, how to say our prayers better, and to preserve more recollection. Perhaps a greater attention to cultivating the little sweetnesses of charity would be the key to our puzzle, and we should be astonished to find how, exactly in proportion as we studied the happiness of those around us, our Lord would infuse into ourselves that sweetness and joy of heart which would make all interior exercises easy and pleasant to us. But this is not to be done without mortification of our own selfishness. May our dear Lord strengthen us all to enter generously on a course of such mortification, and bless all our exercises, to the increase in our hearts of true charity, that we may be united every day more closely to Him, and more closely to one another!

"If you think of it, you will see that there are two objects put before us in Lent: one is penance for our sins; the other is preparation to celebrate the Passion of our Lord. Now, penance and self-correction are cold, hard, and wearisome things to persevere in, unless we can warm and animate them with the fire of charity; and this is what we may hope to do by uniting them with meditation on the sufferings of our Lord. And in like manner we may say, that, to gain the full blessing which meditation on the Passion is capable of bringing, we must apply it to ourselves and get out of it a greater hatred of sin, a greater contempt of ourselves, and a more generous spirit of sacrifice. These two exercises should never be divorced from one another ; and thus our prayer and penance will all have the unction of the Cross of Christ. I would, therefore, suggest that, in beginning this holy season, you should—

"1st, Make a plan, and examine yourselves daily how you keep to it. 2nd, Do not, in making it, seek for multiplicity of practices, but content yourself with a few, and those such as you will really be able to keep to ; as, for example, one subject of self-correction, whether patience, or government of the tongue, or punctuality, or greater carefulness in making meditation or hearing Mass; one exercise of penance ; and one definite exercise of devotion to the Passion—something that will help you to keep it present in your hearts through the day, as an influence, making them more tender and contrite, so that you may not separate in heart and memory from the Cross of Jesus Christ : trying to call more vividly to mind who it is that suffers—God and man ; what He suffers in mind and body ; and for whom He suffers—for sinners, 'of whom I am chief,' as each one of us may say in the words of S. Paul.

"I do pray with all my heart that during this holy time our Masses may be heard more devoutly, our Communions made more lovingly, that our meditations may be careful, and that we may try, during the day, to keep ourselves silent, charitable, solicitous for others, recollected in God's presence, and full of compunction. If so, our hearts will be full of prayer ; and God, in His bounty, will enrich us with many graces, 'beyond all we ask or think,' and bring us to Easter with joyful hearts, flowing over with thanksgiving and charity."

ON THE BENEFIT OF VOCAL PRAYER

" *February* 1887.

" The great trouble of our spiritual lives is the tendency to get languid and tepid ; and it seems to me the chief work of our Lents ought to be to resist and fight against this, not by doing a great many more things, but by trying to get back to the better way of doing them. There is but one remedy for tepidity, but it is an all-powerful one, and that is prayer. ' Is any man sad ? Let him pray.' Tepidity, in ever so small a degree, always has something of the nature of sadness about it. It is the weariness and disgust of the soul ; and that is sadness. Now, prayer is the great weapon against sadness, and sadness is the great enemy of prayer. If we find we have been getting careless in prayer, we are sure also to find that we have been full of weariness and discouragement. Very often we go on in this suffering, unsatisfactory condition, for weeks and months, when, if we did but know it, we might rid ourselves of the misery by half-an-hour of prayer. And very often, also, when we feel as if we could not pray, that dreadful stupor of the soul would be driven away if we knew how to make use of vocal prayer, following a Mass attentively with a prayerbook, or saying, slowly and deliberately, some prayer in honour of the Passion, such as S. Bridget's. Vocal prayer, used earnestly, has immense power for combating spiritual sloth and slovenliness, and getting us out of that half-paralysed condition into which we fall sometimes. And it is surprising how much comes out of a very little thing if it is persevered in. It is impossible to say any prayer on the Passion, seriously and attentively, and not to get good out of it, even sensible good. I believe some persons owe many seasons of aridity and indevotion to the neglect of vocal prayer or of the use of a prayer-book."

ON THE SECRET OF COMPUNCTION

"*February* 13, 1893.

"Here we are at the threshold of another Lent: what are we going to do with it? The Church tells us that it is an 'acceptable time,' but to those who have truly penitent hearts, and bids us pray that we may have them:—

> '*Da tempus acceptabile*
> *Et pœnitens cor tribue.*'[1]

"To make it an acceptable time, therefore, we must try and get the grace of compunction. For you see we don't merely pray for the strength and courage to do penance, but for the grace of penitent hearts. Now, there is only one thing that will touch the heart, and that is love.

"Lent has two objects: to punish us for our sins and to prepare us to celebrate the Sacred Passion of our Lord; and the Passion is the school of love. Without love our Lenten observances will be hard, fruitless things. Unloving penances, unloving exercises, even unloving good works, will not do much for us. You remember our Lord's words in the Gospel, said of a true penitent, that many sins were forgiven her, because she had loved much. Would that those dear and precious words could be said of each one of us!

"I am sure it would profit us all very much if we began this Lent with the intention of obtaining from Almighty God a great increase of Divine love. To love implies a constant thinking of the object beloved, keeping His memory in our minds, and dwelling on it. If we do this, we shall have ever in our thoughts the picture of His kindness, His sweetness, His humility, and His reverence. And it will be hard, if we do this, to be giving way to pride, and bitterness, and selfishness, ourselves.

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[1] Vesper Hymn, First Sunday of Lent.

"To love implies a solicitude to please any one we love, even in little things; and then, again, to love almost obliges us to suffer for one whom we love. How certainly, then, shall we secure all that goes to make up a good and fruitful Lent, if we make love our object! Recollection, and penance, and prayer, and silence, and charity, and humility will all follow in a sort of natural consequence; and it will be truly an acceptable time with us, because we shall have found out the secret of true compunction."

EASTER

"Year after year, the same beautiful words and touching ceremonies return, and certainly not with diminished sense of their beauty, as every year they bring with them new memories of the past.

"This year, I am sure, the same thought must be in all our hearts, that Easter represents to us the life of glory when all sorrow shall be passed; and the Alleluia must have sounded in our ears as the song of heaven, the 'New Song,' full of Divine mysteries, which we shall one day sing in the company of the blessed; and which we must try and sing here with pure lips and thankful hearts, that we may be better fit to join hereafter in that glorious chorus.

"How many dear voices, now silent in our choirs, are this Easter to be heard uniting in that chorus of the angels! How beautiful it must be! and how all our hearts must be filled with a longing to take part in that perfect harmony! And, that it may be so, let us all try to tune our hearts to perfect harmony now; to the harmony of that perfect charity, which will be found in union of hearts, of Sisters with Sisters and with Superiors; of the houses one with another, all desiring the good of all and of each one, and seeking to bear one another's burden, and so to fulfil the law of Christ. Certainly if we have made this practice of a real supernatural charity our great object, there cannot be a doubt that we shall give out a most exquisite harmony to the ears of God, and that all our sacrifices, our work, our singing of the Divine praises, our Communions, and all our community acts, will be a hundredfold more acceptable to Him than they are when we are cold and negligent on this one great point.

"So, my dearest Sisters, let us all try this Easter to make a very great advance in all that concerns Divine charity, that we may both help one another to love God more, and that He may give us the grace, more and more, to love one another in Him, and after the model of Him who, 'having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end.'

"And now Lent ends and Paschal-tide begins, reminding us that all sorrows and all trials have their appointed end, and that, accepted lovingly and borne courageously, they will find their issue in a joy no man taketh from us. Paschal time comes with its Alleluias to be to us once more the figure of heaven, of the 'rest which remains for the people of God,' of the joy into which our Lord's own voice will bid His faithful servants enter. He does not promise them merely that they shall taste joy, but He bids them enter into it, as though it would be like the very air we breathe, penetrating all our powers and all our sanctified senses of body and soul. What can this wonderful joy be but love, that love of which we have a foretaste here, and which is revealed to us in all the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Passion, and, above all, of the Holy Eucharist, and which Holy Week has preached to us in every touching function, and in every word to which we have listened, falling from the lips of our Divine Lord? But here it reveals itself to our hearts only by the sacrifice and the sufferings of Him who gives us that love, than which, as He says, there is none greater, 'that a man lay down his life for his friends.' It is a love which expresses itself by sufferings, and demands to be returned by sacrifice; but the time will come when the sufferings will be no more, when our love and our joy will be the same thing, and we shall enter into them, and abide in them for ever."

ON THE ALLELUIA

"I have tried to pray, not for all merely, but for each one individually, at the Holy Sepulchre, and indeed often, very often, at the Holy Mass; for that is how our Lord thinks of us and our wants, each one individually, knowing us as He does and as we can never know one another. And now also I desire, in like manner, to wish the joys and graces of our Paschal festival to each one, that each may find her own portion of comfort and spiritual joy in the Alleluias we shall have been singing, when you receive this.

"You know the Alleluia is the song of heaven. It contains the expression of all joy; and the one letter which is the expression of human sorrow is exlcuded from it. All the other vowels are there (and, as you know it is the vowels which form the sounds of human language); but the sorrowful *O*, which expresses all our dolorous mysteries, has no part there. How, then, can we have any right to sing it, whilst still on earth, and while all our life is compassed about with loss and suffering of one sort or another? It is, I suppose, to remind us that we are the heirs of eternity—that we must not be subject to the things which make us sorrowful, but must always be 'lifting our eyes to the hills, whence cometh our hope,' looking on to the heavenly city, of which we are even now the citizens . . . and the glorious company to which we belong. This is our home, and the Alleluia is the 'Home, sweet home,' of that glorious family gathering. Their voices unite with ours in singing it—of that we may be sure; therefore, let us try that there may be the harmony of perfect charity in our hearts, that we may not mar it by one false note of discord.

" Have no fear, therefore, and let nothing shake or disturb our confidence in God, who, among His other attributes, claims that of fidelity. He is a faithful friend; one, that is, who will never fail us, and will do a great deal more for us than we dare to hope or expect. Every day we have proofs of it, and every day almost brings us some new and amazing instance of what He does for souls, as though to convince us how true it is that His mercy is beyond all His other works.

" Let us sing our Alleluias with earnest, loving hearts, and resolve to set no limits to the confidence with which we will lean on the fidelity and the loving-kindness of the best of friends ! "

" *April* 3, 1885.

" You look out on the world with which you are surrounded, and you see no beauty, no glory, nothing hardly that speaks of God. All is defaced and defiled with human misery and sin. The black smoke which darkens the very atmosphere of your great city, is not so dark as the cloud of evil which hangs over the living world. It is your privilege and vocation to devote yourself to the work of God, in the midst of a world ' lying in wickedness '—a very great privilege, for which we have reason, every day, to bless God. But how often do not your hearts long for that new heaven and new earth, in which shall dwell righteousness ! How often do you not feel saddened at the sight of poverty and sin which are beyond your powers to banish ! How continually must you not be reminded that you are in exile, living in a world to which you do not belong ; prisoners of hope, only cheered and able to persevere through the certainty which is given you that there are better things in store !

" Well, then, persevere and have courage. ' We shall be satisfied when His glory shall appear.' What must the earth have seemed to Him during the thirty-three years He dwelt in it? No poor court of a miserable city can be so dark and squalid in our eyes as humanity must have been to the sense of Him who came down from heaven to live among His own creatures. He endured it, because He chose to come to it, that He might be its Redeemer.

"But, at last, the day came when His work was done, consummated, perfectly finished. The beautiful dawn of His Easter came at last, and He arose from death, and cast aside the winding-sheet, and came forth out of the sepulchre, resplendent with glory. How gladly He must have looked back on the course He had run! How welcome would every suffering then appear!

"There is no presumption at all in our looking forward to a similar change that is in store for us also. The bars of our cage will be broken; the day will come when our work, too, will be over; and 'we shall be satisfied when His glory shall appear!' It is not possible for us to be satisfied with anything here below. We do not expect it or wish it. But we shall see Him and we shall be satisfied, and then we shall understand the meaning of the *Gaudia Paschalia*, which we are wishing one another to-day.

"*Pax vobiscum*, we say to one another, as our Divine Lord greeted His Apostles. Peace was His good wish to them, and His last, best gift; for He was the Prince of Peace, and what He wished He gave. . . .

"This peace, which passes all understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away, lifts us above our own restless natures, into a tranquil atmosphere, where all the jarring elements of our poor human life are harmonised and made subject to the Holy Spirit of God. This peace, which is distinct from joy, though very much akin to it, is the best thing we can desire in this life for ourselves and for others.

"But it is not gained without a struggle. It comes as a fruit of victory and after many storms. You see its figure and symbol in the outward and visible world. All through these winter months we have had to contend with snow, and wind, and darkness, and bitter cold. The earth seemed dead and desolate and stripped of all beauty and comfort. But at last, in due season, the Paschal sun shines out, bringing its flowers and its gladness, and we come to understand that the dark days have done their work, the stormy winds have been fulfilling the word of their Master, purifying and invigorating, and that the life of nature was not dead but hidden. Spring returns with its beauty and its smiles.

"So, in our hearts, there is and must be a time of storms. The waves of passion swell and toss about, and the winds of our own ungoverned natures drive us hither and thither, until at last they are made subject to One who directs all, even our own wayward wills, to work together for good and not for harm. Even when to our senses all seems dark and confused, we are learning to know our own insufficiency and to distrust ourselves. At last He speaks the word, and rebukes the stormy world within us, and there is a great calm. Then we enter into possession of the peace of God, a peace we should never enjoy or understand, if we had not known what it was to wrestle with our own nature and in the grace of God to overcome!"

"*April* 1887.

"It is always a comfort to know, that, in all our houses, our Sisters do their little utmost to carry out the offices and holy ceremonies, and so are sure to reap a harvest of rejoicing, when the shadow of the pall is taken away and the bells ring out and tell us we have no more to be occupied with death, but with life, the life of our Risen Lord, to whom the Father has given power to give everlasting life to all those who are His.

"And we are His, are we not? We are of the number of those for whom He prayed when He prayed for all those whom God had given Him. God has surely given us to Him. We are His flock and His children by baptism; but by holy profession we are His in a more special way; because, if there was any meaning at all in our act when we made our vows, it meant this, that we gave ourselves to Him. I think there is a special sweetness in this thought at this time, when so many of our Lord's words are spoken to those whom He claims as His own peculiar possession. There is no figure too strong for Him to use to express the closeness of the tie that binds Him to His own, to those who are not of the world, but whom God has given Him out of the world. He is the Vine; we are the branches. The sap of life, that is, of Divine grace which has its source in the root and stock of the mystic Vine, flows thence into the branches. Of themselves, they are dry and barren sticks; but, grafted into Him, they share His life; and, just as we shall see in this spring-time, the seemingly dead and lifeless things of nature putting forth new buds of verdure and blossom, through the power of the returning sap, so we, too, shall bud and blossom, and bear 'very much fruit,' to the glory of the Father, if only we abide united to the Vine.

"He will do all for us, if only we so abide. He will make us sharers of His own everlasting life. He will clothe us with beauty, as He clothes the flowers of the field. He will prepare a place for us, and come again, and take us to Himself. If we ask anything in His name, He will do it. He will not leave us orphans. He will give us the Paraclete, that He may abide with us for ever. He will love us, and will manifest Himself to us. And the Father also will love us and will make His abode with us. These are but a few of the wonderful and precious promises which in that last discourse with His disciples, He poured out on those whom He called His own, and whom, having loved in the world, He loved even to the end. They make our hearts burn; for we know that in these great and precious promises we have our part and portion, because we are His. Surely, we are too often insensible to our own privileges and happiness; and this sometimes makes us dull and languid, when we ought to be overflowing with joy and spiritual fervour."

"*March* 31, 1893.

"As we grow old, and look on the years that are past, we are terrified sometimes to see how empty they have been. Perhaps they are not really so empty as we suppose; for it is not only the labours that make an outward show that give a value to our lives, but much more those many acts of the heart—acts of faith, and charity, and contrition—of which God alone takes note, and numbers as good works, which He will not fail to reward. If, then, our lives seem poor in good works, such as the world makes much account of, we can set about to make them rich in these interior acts, and may feel certain that the richest of all lives will be found to be that which has been most full of acts of the love of God.

"Let us set about heaping up a great store of these riches. They do not need great talents, for they are gained, not by the head, but by the heart. Sickness and suffering will not hinder us; on the contrary, more than anything does suffering intensify love. Nor need we be afraid lest calls of work or duty should stand in the way; for every duty faithfully discharged is an act of love. All we have to do is to keep our eyes fixed on Him who promised, when He was lifted up, to 'draw all things' to Himself. All through the past week we have been following Him closely, and our eyes have never lost sight of Him in His sufferings and humiliations. Now, let us gladden our hearts by gazing on Him in His risen beauty and glory, confessing Him, with S. Thomas, to be our Lord and our God. Happy, indeed, if we can say with S. Peter, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

"May He give us all a great abundance of this most excellent gift, that, loving Him in all things, and above all things, we may learn also how to love one another better and more tenderly, and find, among our Paschal joys, a great increase in the sweetness of fraternal charity ! "

FEAST OF OUR HOLY MOTHER, S. CATHERINE OF SIENA

April 30, 1882.

" What a wonderful thing it is to have S. Catherine for our Mother, to feel sure, that, between her and us, there is a special tie of love and intimacy, so that she knows and concerns herself about us, each one ! Now, this is just what our weak faith finds it hard to realise ; and yet it is precisely what is implied in having a patron saint, one who never forgets us before God, but continually 'stands for us before the Judge's throne.'

" Our holy Mother's life is so vast and so full, one cannot do more than dwell on one part of it at a time ; but among all the points in it on which we may dwell, I think one always returns to the exchange of hearts with our Lord, as the most beautiful and the most instructive. The most beautiful—for what can be so lovely as the thought of a creature possessing the heart of our Lord in lieu of her own ! His thoughts, instead of her thoughts ; His desires, intentions, and dispositions, in place of her own : getting rid of her own inner self, with all that was mean, and base, and selfish in it—all this swallowed up by the substitution of the interior life of Jesus !

" And most instructive, because we cannot take it as merely a mystical wonder. The mystical, miraculous part was only the exterior sign : the real fact was the perfect surrender of the human will, by which she obtained, instead of her own will, the will of Christ. And there is a sense and a degree in which the same gift would be ours, on the same condition. The more perfectly we surrender our wills to God, the more perfectly He would change our hearts and fill them with the Spirit of His Divine Son. I am sure it is this ‘ change of heart ’ we all long for so much. We are all conscious how weak and unstable are our own poor hearts ; but we cannot of ourselves change them.

“ How can we be set free from our own besetting weaknesses ? You see, my dear Sisters, the answer is clear enough : God will do it. He will effect ‘ the change of the right hand of the Most High.’ He will give us new hearts, new loves, new aims and intentions, if we will give Him our wills. This is the grace we must all ask our holy Mother to obtain for us, that with new hearts we may truly become new creatures.”

“ *April* 28, 1884.

“ To you, who are living in S. Catherine’s own convent, I wish a very special joy on her approaching feast ; and I hope she will come and spend it amongst you and fill you with the joy and sweetness of her dear presence. . . .

“ I do not know how it is that any one can be afraid of our holy Mother. If we could have known her and lived with her, we should have seen the sweetest, most joyous, most sympathetic of friends. There was nothing grim or severe about her. Of course, she could have given us all a scolding, if we deserved it ; but she would have recreated with us and sat among us, making her crosses and garlands of flowers ; and she would have had a playful word for one and a kind word for another ; and we should have loved her with all our hearts and souls.

“ And she would have taught us all we want to learn : how always to keep our hearts at peace by simply desiring nothing in the world but God.

“ ‘ How silly,’ she says, ‘ to be always worrying one’s self whether we have got things or whether we have not. We worry if we have got them, lest we should lose them ; and we worry if we have not got them, because we long to have them. And yet all these things are so small, smaller than our souls. Everything in the world is smaller than our souls, for everything was made for us, but our souls were made for God. He is the only thing worth the love of a soul ; He, the Supreme Goodness, the Supreme Riches, the Supreme Wisdom, the Supreme Beauty. Let us love Him, then, and all things in Him, and nothing out of Him. Then we shall be at peace.'

" At other times she told her children of a certain wonderful secret, a sort of talisman, which, if they possessed, they would be victorious in all things. No matter who opposed them, no matter what should be said or done against them, no matter what trouble might come upon them, this talisman would make them 'always the mistress.' What do you suppose it was ? I could copy out whole pages of the Dialogue and of her letters in its praise : it was what she possessed in perfection, and it was just what preserved the smile ever on her lips, and the light ever on her brow.

" It was called Patience. S. Catherine was the Doctress of Patience. She never named it without some loving epithet, such as, ' Sweet Patience ! ' ' Patience the Queen ! ' ' Patience which always conquers, and is never overcome.'

" So, by way of a gift on her Feast, I will just send you one little word of hers on this, her favourite virtue. ' When self-will is dead,' she says, ' we come to taste, amid our tears, the sweetness of patience. O wondrously delicious fruit ! how sweet thou art to those who taste thee, even as thou wert to Me, who tasted thy sweetness, abiding in bitterness on the cross ! In the time of suffering, thou bringest peace ; the tempests arise, the ocean waves rage and foam, and toss about the vessel of the soul ; then thou comest calmly and tranquilly, sheltering the poor, weather-beaten vessel under the memory of the sweet Eternal and Divine Will ; so that, covered as by a garment, the foaming waves cannot penetrate it, and it receives no harm.

"'O beloved daughter, this royal Queen of Patience will uphold thee upon a rock; she holds the fortress against all comers. She overcomes all enemies, and is never overcome; and she is never alone, but brings perseverance in her train. She is the very pith and marrow of charity. Other virtues may deceive us, but patience, never. If she is in the soul, there is charity, there is humility, there is the love of Me, there are all the virtues'

"Let us beg our seraphic Mother, that, as she obtained from her Divine Spouse the perfection of charity, she may obtain for us, her children, the perfection of patience."

"*April* 28, 1889.

"Our dear and holy Mother, S. Catherine, always seems to bring joy with her, coming amid the Paschal Alleluias and spring flowers; so I hope she will give you all a joyful welcome with her own beautiful smile.

"What a grace and privilege it is to have such a Mother! Truly is she the 'valiant woman,' *par excellence*, 'putting forth her hand to strong things,' and calling on us, her children, to do the same. For, you know, the hand in Holy Scripture is always interpreted to signify the will. What the hand is to the body, the will is to the soul. The hand is the instrument by which we do everything—write, work, dig, or sew. And just so, there is no act that is an act, which does not require the movement of the will. By the will alone can we either do right or wrong.

"And this shows us the exceeding importance of cherishing and strengthening this sovereign power of the soul, so that, from the very first, it may have the power of resistance. Now, this strength of the will, proceeding, not from nature, but from Divine grace, is the one thing which enters into all S. Catherine's spiritual direction. As in example she was, by excellence, 'the valiant woman,' standing like a rock, and wrestling for the right, so, in her teaching, she is always insisting on the freedom of the will, and reminding us that it is a fortress from which we cannot be driven, either by men or devils, unless by our own consent. We may surrender the fortress; but it must be by our own act. And S. Catherine will not endure the excuses that people make, saying that their wills are weak, and that they 'cannot help' this or that. 'Our wills of themselves are weak,' she says, 'but, anchored in the Will of God, they are strong. Let no one say, I cannot help it. Every reasonable being can use his will aright, if he chooses to do so.'

" 'Anchored in the Will of God!' What lovely words these are! How they give the idea of calm security! The hour when we do so fix our wills in their true centre is the hour of our first real conversion. But to do so demands the resolute putting forth of the hand to strong things. And the second step of conversion, which is the abiding perseverance in what is right, demands yet more. It is one thing to turn away from evil and begin a new life; and quite another to go on, day after day, and year after year, in spite of failures, and disappointments, and daily falls, still struggling to keep the head of the boat steadily working against the current and the tide, still strong in resistance, persevering to the end. Yet this is our perfection. Perfection in this life is not exactly in seizing the prize, but in stretching towards the mark: so S. Paul tells us. And this demands far greater strength than the first effort, by which we made our beginning. It implies, not merely the putting forth the hand to strong things, but the actual handling of the distaff; that is, the daily work, the daily application of mind and sacrifice of body, the daily conquest of self, and unceasing exercise of the resolute will.

"To whom can we better look for help, for example, and direction than to our seraphic Mother? She knows what it is to wage this warfare, she knows the price of the victory and the value of the crown. She knows both what it is to conquer and what it is at times to fail. Blessed Raymond tells us, that, from time to time, our Lord permitted her to fall into faults, which, however trifling in our eyes, to her seemed great, to humble her and keep her in a state of dependence. But they never discouraged her or made her flinch. The strong purpose never wavered. And this is the special perfection which we should try and imitate, the special grace we should ask her, on her coming feast, to obtain for us, this constancy of the will in the service of God, in virtue of which, in spite of a thousand shortcomings and defects, we may always aim and struggle after the more excellent things. *Usque ad mortem certa pro justitia* :[1] these were our dear Mother Imelda's favourite words.

" Let us also take them as our motto, and beg of our seraphic Mother the grace to carry them into effect."

" *April* 28, 1890.

" I hope, please God, that our holy Mother's feast may find you all entering on your new works, which may, with His blessing, open larger means of devoting yourselves to Him and to souls ; and that will be a very sweet offering to her and very much according to her spirit. May we all inherit that spirit in its fullest measure, though I think we sometimes fall a little short of comprehending it aright, when we call it the ' love of souls.' That was only the fruit : the real root of the tree was the overpowering love of God. She loved souls, because God loved them, because He died for them, because they were His members and a part of Himself. Her spirit is not so much the love of souls as the love of God in souls. This is the only thing which will preserve our love of creatures from the danger of getting spoilt by self-love and self-seeking. For we may spoil even Divine things, if we seek them in a human way ; and, apart from the love of God, even work for souls may be so spoilt.

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[1] " Even unto death fight for justice " (Ecclus. iv. 33).

" This she herself teaches us in her Dialogue, where she says that, unless our charity to our neighbour is based on the love of God, nothing we do for others will avail for eternal life. Speaking in the person of our Lord, she says, ' I ask of you to love Me as I have loved you. You cannot do this perfectly, because I loved you without being first loved. . . . The love you give to Me is the discharge of a debt and not the bestowal of a favour ; whereas Mine is a free gift which I in no sort owe you. You cannot, therefore, give Me directly the same love which I give to you. But you may give it to Me indirectly, by means of your neighbour. Do for him what you cannot do for Me, and I will count it as done for Me. . . Love him freely for My sake, and I will accept it, not as a debt, but a free gift of love. And it is only by showing him charity, for My sake, that what you do will avail for eternal life ! '

" What a sweet and sublime way this is of putting before us the exercise of charity to others ! Every one, not only the poor and sick, but every soul bearing the image of God becomes His representative. He chooses two places in which to abide, and bids us seek Him there —the Holy Sacrament of the Altar and the souls of our neighbours. Our Sisters, the children we teach, every one whom God brings near us and in contact with us, in each and all we may find Him, and minister to Him in them.

" This is S. Catherine's idea of works of charity ; and we shall acquire her real spirit, in proportion as we clothe ourselves with these principles of grace.

" Let me just say, it would be a sad inconsistency to work for the souls of the poor and of children, and to forget the needs of those whom God has given us in His own house. They too, and they above all, have a claim on our love and our service ; we must respect them as souls, if we would truly love them as Sisters. May our Lord pour into our hearts a great flood of this mutual love !

" May our seraphic Mother obtain for all of us a double share of her spirit.

" You will say, it is indeed a great thing to ask for : too great to hope for. But nothing is too great for hope ; and then, do we thoroughly understand what her spirit was ? It was made up of two things : the love of God and the love of souls. She loved souls, because she loved God and because He had made her understand the worth and dignity of a soul. No matter how debased, and miserable, and sinful a soul was, she still regarded it with an infinite respect, as something dear to God, capable of loving Him and created to be united to Him.

" So she never tired of reminding her disciples that they possessed a treasure committed to their care, compared to which all the gold and jewels of the world were dust and ashes. 'The soul,' she says, 'cannot live without love, for it was created for love and by love. Herein is its amazing dignity, that it is able to love God.' Then she goes on to describe what she means by love. 'The soul that loves God, clothes itself with His Will. It may suffer, it is true ; but it suffers in loving : its self-will dies. And, when self-will is once dead, all suffering disappears ; our will becomes one with God's Will, and we enjoy the foretaste of eternal life.'

" This, my dearest Sisters, is S. Catherine's doctrine, the essence of her spirit : nothing out of our reach, or too profound for us to understand, simply what we have all vowed to do and to be, when we took the vow of obedience, and by so doing promised to put self-will to death. Easy in words, hard in practice, 'yet has it a great reward, even eternal life,' of which, in this life, as S. Catherine tells us, it gives us the foretaste.

" The love of God, then, and the love of souls, this is what we have to live for. Thanks be to His goodness, we all, I hope, love souls a little and do our little best for them, but let us do more.

" May our holy Mother obtain for all of us something of that 'perfection of charity' which she herself enjoyed. But at what a cost did she obtain it ! It was so with all the Saints : their gifts and graces seem to have been in proportion to their sufferings, and this should encourage us to bear our little measure cheerfully and joyfully, and hope that it may obtain for us something we could never receive, if we had no portion in the Cross of Christ.

" Let us try and put before us such a life as our holy Mother's. Thirty-three years of almost uninterrupted bodily suffering and continual labours, contact with most abandoned souls, calumny, ingratitude ; and, far beyond all this, the torture of living on in this world, after she had actually seen and tasted the joys of Paradise.

" It cannot be doubted that, to such a soul as hers, the sight and knowledge of sin must have been a continual agony. This for thirty-three years. And for five hundred years she has been enjoying the Vision of God ! If she has ever had a regret during all that time, it can only have been that she did not suffer more for her " Eternal Spouse," that she was not suffered actually to receive the crown of martyrdom, that she was not suffered to serve Him for a longer space, and win more souls to Him, and do more for His glory, no matter at what sacrifice to herself. For of all the lessons which her glorious life gives us, there is none, I think, which comes near to her magnificent generosity ; and this in our degree we can try to imitate, as year after year goes by, and we have still to bear our burden, and suffer ills of body, and, it may be, weariness of mind, privations of one sort or another, and the crossings of our wills, 'all of which,' we are reminded, we 'should bear patiently ; because, though grievous at the time, yet have they a great reward, even eternal life.' May that reward be ours, my dear Sisters; and may this sure and certain hope fill us with joy and courage, to persevere without fainting, even to the end: *usque ad mortem.*

"The doctrine of S. Catherine is simply what we have all vowed to do and to be, when we took our vows of obedience, and, by so doing, promised to put our self-will to death. Easy to say and hard to pactise; and yet not hard, for it has the promise of eternal life and obtains for us the foretaste and blessed sweetness of the same, even here below."

FEAST OF PENTECOST

"With all my heart, I wish you a happy feast on this great and beautiful solemnity, which celebrates the crowning gift in that long chain of gifts which make up the Christian mysteries.

"Possibly you may have fed your own devotion by reading over and meditating on those two lists of beautiful words—the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Ghost. They seem to embrace all our spiritual wants! all our intellectual capacities find their perfection and expansion in the Gifts, while the Fruits exhibit the action of the same Divine Spirit in the heart. And this is exactly what S. Francis of Sales says, in one of his sermons, of the twofold work of the Holy Ghost. He illuminates the understanding to know the truth, and He warms the heart to love the law of God. The Saint finds a mysterious allusion to this, even in the number of one hundred and twenty, which was the number of the believers who were gathered together in the Cenacle on the day of Pentecost; a number which is made up of twelve multiplied by ten: the twelve articles of the faith, enriched by the observance of the Ten Commandments of God.

"And it is certain that, when we ponder these holy words in our hearts, we instinctively feel that neither of the lists is perfect without the other. Wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge, even though they mean far more than the mere intellectual operations to which we ordinarily apply these words, would not satisfy us, unless accompanied by charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, and goodness. We cannot do without the light to guide us, and, still less, without the fire to warm our hearts. And, in examining whether we really do find in ourselves the marks and tokens of that new heart and new spirit which ought to be in those who are signed with the Holy Spirit, it is to the fruits we must chiefly look, 'for by their fruits you shall know them.'

"And I will just say this, that, if there are any virtues more proper than others for us religious, and which are more suitable to our state, they are the Fruits of the Holy Ghost. What would any community be that possessed them in greatest perfection? I say nothing of charity, which all must feel to be the one essential condition of community life; but how would joy and peace make sunshine in it! how many thorns would patience take out of our path! how pleasant and easy would long-suffering, and goodness, and benignity make our intercourse with one another; and how would the good odour, the grace, and beauty of virtue, shine in meekness, modesty, and the rest!

"Let us not then despair of realising, in the sight of God and His holy angels, this beautiful idea. He intended the homes of His chosen spouses to be retreats, sheltered from the cold, cutting winds of worldly temptation, in which these lovely flowers might blossom and flourish as in a garden enclosed. Here the Holy Spirit should have His full action; here He should reign supreme over our hearts and mould them as He wills. And He will certainly do so, if we do but clear away the obstacles with a generous hand. May that Divine Spouse not be disappointed then, when 'He comes to

His Garden to eat the fruit of His apple trees,' but may He find there 'the aromatical spices' of these beautiful virtues giving forth, far and wide, 'the good odour of Christ'!"

"*May* 22, 1885.

"I do not need to remind you, that, as religious, our work is only half done, if it be not an interior work. Exterior exercises will profit us little or nothing, if the interior be barren and neglected. But this interior growth must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and we must yield ourselves to His dominion, and be, as S. Paul says, 'led by the Spirit,' if we hope to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. It is to this interior life that S. Catherine invites us, when she tells us of the cell in our hearts; an interior life which souls may lead, even in the midst of 'the loud stunning tide of human care and crime.' . .

"I like to think of all of you carrying the grace of God into the world of sin, in the midst of which you live, shut up in your hearts as in a ciborium, but diffusing around the sweet odour of Christ, and scattering seeds which may bring forth a blessed harvest in time to come. For it is most certain that the fruit of your labours will be in proportion to the grace that is within, far more than to the labour that is without. I was reading, the other day, of a poor woman in France, who was accustomed to go through the streets of the city, 'sowing Hail Maries,' as she called it, and whose prayers were the means of saving many souls.

"I envy my Sisters who are able, day after day, to spend themselves in these good works, whilst I sit at home idle. I can but hope I may share in their merit, and do, with all my heart, pray that God will bless their labours and garner for them a great reward."

"*June* 11, 1886.

"Just let us take one of the beautiful fruits of the

Holy Ghost, Peace, and dwell on it in our hearts for a few minutes. Peace of soul is something different from joy, less rapturous but more calm. You can feel peace, even in the midst of suffering; and, of all spiritual secrets, the secret of preserving or regaining spiritual peace is one of the most precious.

"It flows, firstly, from a conscience at rest: 'the fruit of justice is peace;' secondly, from a love of Divine things and of the Will of God: 'Great peace have they who love Thy law, and to them there is no stumbling-block;' thirdly, from detachment: for detachment delivers us from the unquietness of desires, which are always disturbing and fretting us; fourthly, from humility: for, of all the profound experiences of interior peace, none equals that which flows into the soul when it has bowed its head to a humiliation; and, lastly, it is the almost infallible consequence of prayer, not of a passing, hasty, occasional prayer, but of prayer long persevered in, and really earnest and heartfelt. Let any one keep on praying, and opening his heart to God, and the floodgates of peace will open upon him. . . . How much I desire that this beautiful fruit of peace may be very rich and abundant in all your souls! How calm, how tranquil, how just, how free from the ugly storms of human passions, will your dear souls then be. They will be just like a clear, calm sea, which, in proportion as it is calm and clear, reflects the beautiful blue of the heavens. . . . . S. Thomas says, *Pax est tranquillitas ordinis*, 'Peace is the tranquillity of order,' and they are words well worthy of our remembrance and meditation."

"*May* 18, 1888.

"S. John, in the Apocalypse, tells us that he beheld, in the Paradise of God, the tree of Life yielding twelve fruits. The soul of the just resembles this tree. Indeed, there is a singular connection between the description of this tree, 'standing by the side of the river of the water of life,' and that other passage in the first Psalm, where we read of the servant of God, that 'he shall be like a tree planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruits in due season.' Surely, if souls are anywhere to be found who deserve thus to be described, it should be in the house of God, among His own spouses, whom He has planted by the running waters of Divine grace, whom He shelters from the scorching heats of passion and the chilling winds of worldliness, so that they preserve the youth and verdure of their souls. Their leaf does not fall off; and He looks that they bring forth the fruits of perfection.

"What a happiness is ours, then, my dear Sisters, to be planted in the very garden of Holy Church, as S. Catherine called the religious state, where all the choicest influences are stored up for our use—the fertilising sun, the early and the latter rain, the waters of refreshment! We must not be barren fig-trees, whereon, when our Lord comes seeking fruit, He finds nothing but leaves only. May the Holy Spirit of God Himself produce in us an abundance of these delicious fruits, and so make of our religious homes 'a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up, a paradise of pomegranates, with all the fruits of the orchard,' that our Beloved may Himself 'come into His garden, and eat the fruits thereof.'![1]

"The world knows nothing of the sweetness that is stored up in that garden: to its sense, it is truly a 'fountain sealed up.' But you know the fragrance which first attracted your heart, and the delight, passing all worldly joys, which you have found therein; and you will unite with me in thanking the Lord of the garden for calling us into His earthly Paradise, and permitting us, even in this life, to taste something of that joy and peace which the world cannot give or take away."

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[1] Cant. iv. 12, 13, and v. 1.

"*May* 19, 1893.

"To-day there are put before us the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which we have all received, and for which, whilst we earnestly pray for their increase, we must also devoutly give thanks.

"The greatest of these is the gift of Wisdom. It contains in itself the perfection both of our will and understanding. The Latin word expresses its nature in a way that is not conveyed in English. *Sapientia* implies a certain taste or savour of what is good, a spiritual sense and delight in it. Just as our bodily senses delight in exterior goods, so this gift of wisdom disposes us to delight in those higher goods, which are wholly interior, and above all to delight in God. In this sense, we find it constantly spoken of in Holy Scripture. 'Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.' The holy Psalmist is not content with urging on us to obey the law of God, but we must love it. In Psalm cxviii., we declare, over and over again, that the 'law of the Lord is our delight.' And it is this love and relish of all that belongs to the Will of God, which is properly what we mean by wisdom.

"One of the great contemplative writers of the Church, John Ruysbroeck, tries to explain how we may grow in this great gift, which contains within itself the secret of an ineffable happiness. 'It comes to us,' he says, 'in proportion as we know more of God, and this is why we call it wisdom. If, turning our eyes away from the littleness of created things, we fix the eyes of our heart on God, we come to know and understand more of His beauty, the riches of His goodness, His wonderful life, and how in Him is all peace, joy, security, and beatitude. He is the Alpha and Omega of all things, the Beginning and the End.'

"It is very little that we can comprehend of all this; nevertheless, without fully comprehending it, we know and believe that in God himself is all perfection, and that for Him, and Him alone, we were created. He is our End This centre of all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, and all joy is the end, to reach which, and to be united to which for ever, is the one reason of our creation. Just as you build a house to live in it, or a ship that it may carry you to a port, and they have no sense or meaning except for that purpose, so there is no sense or meaning in our existence, unless we follow after and attain this one End.

" All this we know by faith, and it is when this faith sinks into our heart of hearts, and we live in it, so that the great End is always before us, and the mere thought and memory of it delight us, and we realise that it is so glorious and magnificent, that it is worth while our giving all we have and all we are to secure it : no sacrifice too great, no suffering worthy to be named, nothing to be put in comparison with it for a moment ; it is when we are conscious of this and more than this, which words can poorly express, that we are relishing something of the taste and savour of true wisdom.

" ' In a certain sense, the eternal contemplation of this perfection in its very essence,' says Ruysbroeck, 'makes up the beatitude of God Himself ; so that we share in His infinite blessedness, even in this life, when our understanding is fed by the contemplation of the truth and beauty of God, and our will stretches out to adhere to His will, delighting in the law of the Lord.'

" When we read of these things and consider in what way the Saints saw and understood them, it makes us conscious how much peace and happiness, even in this life, we lose, by allowing our hearts to rest on anything but God. How many things we suffer to trouble and disturb us, which one thought of Him would make us see were too small and miserable to deserve, for one moment, the attentions of beings created for this one End. And specially, we in religion, who profess in a double and triple sense to have chosen Him, ' God alone,' as our only portion, what a happiness and forestate of heaven might, and ought to be, ours, if we were but faithful in keeping this our End in view !

" May He unveil this great truth to us more and more, and make us daily more and more disposed to fix our hearts where true joys only are to be found, so that, as we have been saying during the last lovely Novena, He may be our present joy here and our future and eternal reward ! "

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

" *June* 3, 1891.

" I have, from various causes, been unable to write to you this year for Pentecost, or Corpus Christi, so that I must try and say a few words on the feast of the Sacred Heart, for which we are all preparing. If to the whole Church it is the special feast of Divine Love, it must surely be doubly precious to us, His spouses, when we think how that Heart has chosen us out, and elected us to such a dignity, and conferred on us its love of preference.

" There are many reasons which move me, when speaking to you of the love of the Sacred Heart, to do so in reference to our own sublime vocation. When we pronounced our vows, which bound us to our Lord, *usque ad mortem,* ' even unto death,' it was a most true and sacred espousal. We gave ourselves to Him then without reserve or conditions. There was an exchange indeed, for He also gave Himself to us ; but there was no bargain. We did not promise to be faithful to Him, provided He would give us health, or the opportunity of working in this or that way, or in this or that place, rank, or office. We did not understand that, if these conditions failed, we should be free from our engagements. Nor did the notion occur to us that such a condition or contract would be just and fair. How could it, when we knew full well, that, in any case, we should receive so far more than we could ever hope to give, that the balance would always remain in our favour ?

" It was the state of religion we embraced, not any accidental circumstances about it, such as its work, however useful. And it was a transaction of pure love, God condescending to choose us, and we, in return, blindly and confidingly giving ourselves to Him, and declaring ourselves content with Him, as ' God alone.'

" How much these words imply ! He may do what He likes with us. If He sees fit, He may suffer our life to become a living death. We may become paralysed or blind ; we may be, like blessed Bartolomea, on a sick-bed for forty-five years. But, whatever happens, we are His ; and we know, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that in doing or suffering whatever He chooses or appoints, we shall find our certain sanctification here and win our crown hereafter. If we do not understand this, and if God alone does not suffice us, there is something defective in the way we have taken ; there was some reserve in our way of making our sacrifice ; and we are in the position of foolish creatures, who, having as their portion the Lord of heaven and earth, are not content, but want something more.

" My dearest Sisters, I do believe of all of you that it is not so with you ; but that you love and prize your holy vocation for its own sake, and because it binds you to Him, and that no other desire fills your hearts, save to be found faithful to Him in the way in which He calls you. But, in these unstable days, we must always stand on our guard, lest the spirit of the world and of self creep in and tarnish our sacrifice. Remember that perseverance is the gift of God ; we cannot reckon on it ; it hangs on our fidelity. We must distrust our own weakness, and repel the first entrance of discontented thoughts, and always be going back to the true and solid principles, asking ourselves what we came here for—was it not for God ? Was it for self-satisfaction, or anything beyond or beside

Him ?—And we must be continually offering ourselves anew in the simplicity of love, to be, to do, to suffer whatever He chooses, provided only He gives us the grace to remain His for ever.

" Tu esto nostrum gaudium
Qui es futurus praemium.

" He can be our present joy, as He will be our future reward.

" This is the language of every true lover, and may it find its response in all our hearts ! "

FEAST OF OUR HOLY FATHER S. DOMINIC

1882.

" To-morrow we shall be united as children round the feet of our glorious Father. What a blessing it is to have such a father, and how dearly one would like to be able to see him face to face and to tell him how truly we love him ! One likes to think of him, as S. Catherine describes him, like our Divine Lord, as in name, so in deed, and so even in the exterior beauty and majesty of his person. And this is the special mark of his sanctity. He was the faithful image of his Master. The life of that Divine Master lived in his heart, and it shone out in all his actions. Like him, He was always giving himself to others ; like Him, he could never be humble enough, patient enough, suffering enough—and all for souls, and all for the love of God.

" Sometimes, when one reads of his heroic penances, and his 'agonising' prayers, *agonizans pro Christi nomine*, they read like an excess. But then we must remember that there could be no 'excess' equal to that which our Lord 'accomplished at Jerusalem.' All the Saints were guilty of excesses, because they were all the victims of Divine love ; and love knows no measure of human prudence.

" I suppose it is with this idea of the likeness of our holy Father to our Divine Lord, that the three first lessons of the Office are chosen, which remind us how Christ was 'the image of God,' and how we must bear His image, always 'bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be made manifest in our bodies.'[1] This is sanctity and the only real sanctity, the manifestation in our lives of the life of Jesus Christ. We must be like Him. It is no use our inventing a sanctity of our own, which is not meek and humble as He was, and which does not renounce self as He renounced and emptied Himself; and which, instead of being generous, and giving itself as 'He gave Himself,' is selfish and narrow of heart. We must all, some more, some less, some in one way and some in another, be like our Lord.

"When we get to heaven, we shall see Him face to face in His ineffable beauty. Then, looking round the ranks of the Blessed, we shall see on the countenances of all a certain reflection of that beauty. No two will be alike, yet all will have a likeness to their Lord. S. Francis will not be like S. Vincent of Paul; but in S. Francis will be reflected something of the Sacred Passion, and in S. Vincent the life of Him who 'went about doing good.' There will be great souls, like S. Catherine, and hidden souls, of whose beauty the world has never talked—but one and all will catch their own ray from the brightness of His presence, and will reflect it in their own way.

"I am sure you have all been thinking of our holy Father during this Novena, and praying to him, and loving him. You have seen him standing before you in his heavenly beauty, with the star on his forehead and the lily in his hand; and he has been inviting you to follow in his footsteps, to build a ladder to heaven, by the labour of your hands and the weary toil of your heads and hearts; and to thirst, like him, for the martyrdom of self-sacrifice, and to tread down the world under your feet, and to put forth your hands to strong things, and to be like him—*Dominicus*, that is, all for his Lord. There is our holy Father's type of sanctity, where everything is great, noble, and princely. But do not forget, it was sweet as well. He was not only *Dux et victor*, 'the leader and victor,' but he was the *Rosa patientiæ*, and the *Virignitatis lilium*: the 'rose of patience,' and the 'lily of purity,' shed round about him their fragrant odour. His tears are all tears of tenderness and love; he is fervent and all on fire with charity; he is the *Pie Pater*, as well as the *Magne Pater*: not only great but loving; and the great gift he has to give us, his last bequest, of which we so often remind one another when we sing those beautiful words, is hope, and a 'wonderful hope'!

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[1] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

"How could it be otherwise? How should they not inherit a 'wonderful hope,' who are faithful to the wonderful grace of their wonderful vocation? For, when we come to think of the gifts of God to those whom He calls to follow Him in the company of the Saints, all is wonderful. Our whole lives, compassed about with the supernatural, and taken out of the order of mere flesh and blood, supported by Sacraments, dignified by the close and continued presence of God, devoted, not to the base things of the world, but to the noble things of a Divine service—our little daily lives, so regarded, are truly wonderful. Angels are always ministering to us, evil spirits fear us, graces are every moment coming down upon us, and a crown of joy and glory is, as it were, hanging over our heads and waiting for us; and all that is wanting is a little patience, a little perseverance, a few more years of cheerful labour; and then this 'wonderful hope' will be realised, and we shall hear the words our holy Father heard: *Veni, dilecte, et in vera gaudia ingredere!* 'Come, My beloved, and enter into true joy!'"

1884.

"This time next year, I hope you will be celebrating the feast of our holy Father in your new choir. The time has been when he has visited the choirs of his children, and has been seen and heard animating them to sing with fervour, saying *Fortiter, fortiter!* 'Manfully, manfully.'

"This was one of his words: *fortiter*. He would like to see us strong: strong in our prayers, strong in our acts, and strong in our endurance. He was himself so great and magnanimous, that I have not the least doubt he sang the Office, just as he preached and prayed, with all his heart and all his powers. This was part of his character, that, whatever he did, was entirely and generously done. He was *Dominicus*, that is, the Lord's—His entirely, having given himself to his Lord and Master, body and soul, with all his heart and all his faculties.

"This is a point we can try and imitate. We cannot raise the dead or multiply the bread, but we can be 'the Lord's,' belonging to God, and to Him alone, and belonging to Him with generous devotedness."

1887.

"If we may believe the stories told us in the History of the Order, our holy Father, S. Dominic, has sometimes come when the Brethren were all celebrating their feast, and has appeared in person to share their joy, as the father of the family.

"What if he came to us to-day and spoke with us face to face? We know very well what he would speak about; for, even when he was in the world, 'he never spoke, save *to* God, or *of* God.' Perhaps he would take out of his bosom that Gospel of S. Matthew which he always carried there, and would read us some words out of it. He would read of the treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and for joy sold all that he had, and bought it. And he would tell us that this treasure is our great vocation, hidden indeed, and which the world does not even guess of, but which to us is nothing less than 'the Kingdom of Heaven.'

"Or he would read to us of the young man in the Gospel who had great possessions, and so would not sell all he had to buy that treasure. He had houses and lands, and horses and dogs, plenty to eat and drink, and money to spend. So he was sorrowful at the thought of parting with these things, and preferred them to the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Or he would read to us of some fishermen, who were one day by the sea-side, in the boat, with their father, mending their nets. And they saw a Stranger passing by, and heard His voice saying to them, 'Follow Me.' They had never seen one like Him before; and His voice had in it something much more than music. Impossible to say what that voice said to their hearts: but, on hearing it, they left their boats, and their nets, and their father, and followed Him. 'Lo,' they said afterwards, 'we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?' And this was the answer, 'In this life, a hundred times as much, and in the world to come, life everlasting.'

"How wonderfully sweet it would be if we could sit round our holy Father, and hear him read us these beautiful stories! What a sweet and precious feast we should be spending! Possibly, some of us would find courage to question him, and say, 'This was just what you did, holy Father, six hundred years ago, when you were in the world. You left father and mother; you left that pleasant home at Osma; you left your own country; you left everything and everybody. You were rich, and you became poor. You went barefoot over the thorns and the sharp rocks. You lay on the hard ground and never had so much as a poor cell you called your own. You were always journeying, and preaching, and doing penance, and saving souls. It was a hard life, and wore you out before you were fifty years old. Do you regret it now, or think you did too much, or gave up more than you need have given up, or worked too hard ? ' What would he reply ? I cannot venture to guess this ; but possibly he would be like those whom our Lord describes as standing before Him at the last day, to whom He says : ' I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, and in want you ministered to Me.' And they reply, ' When, Lord, did we do this ? ' In the sight of all He has done for them, they cannot remember that they have ever done anything ; and, just about to be put in possession of all He is giving them, they feel that, instead of having given Him all, they have given Him nothing.

" Well, my dear Sisters, if our Holy Father is not here in his visible presence, we may hope and believe he is with us in spirit on this his own festival ; and we will ask him to give us understanding hearts, to comprehend what God has done for us, in calling us into his family, and clothing us with his spotless livery, and to help us to render something to the Lord for all that He has rendered to us in the gift of our religious vocation."

1886.

" Whilst wishing each other all the joys and graces of our great family festival, the feast of our holy Father, which we are about to celebrate together in spirit, we shall, I am sure, be praying for one another, that we may, year by year, better understand the privilege of being children of so glorious a Saint, and that we may do what in us lies to keep alive among us his true teaching and spirit.

" In some respects, S. Dominic stands alone among the Saints. We have very few of his words, compared with what is preserved of other Saints ; and, as was the case with our Divine Lord, of the greater portion of his life, history tells us almost nothing.

" There is no sort of proportion, for instance, between what we know of him and what we know of S. Catherine. And yet his character and figure are as distinct from all others as those of S. Francis or S. Ignatius.

" And there is a special feature about him which makes his likeness so unmistakable—he was, we know, the great apostle of his time, the ' Preacher ' *par excellence*. He was literally devoured by a zeal for souls, approaching that of S. Paul. His prayers and his ' inexpressible penances ' were all devoted to this end. He asked of God to use him as a stone to block up the mouth of hell, that no more poor souls might fall therein. Even in his sleep he was heard murmuring, ' What will become of sinners ? ' All this we know, and it makes us think of him as the burning torch, the great extirpator of heresy, the champion of the cause of God, the Apostle of his age.

" But, if we had heard him, and seen him, and been in his daily company, we should have beheld one in whom, according to the testimony of every one who has written about him from personal knowledge, the distinguishing feature was an imperturbable serenity, a peace which had its root in the firm adhesion to God, which had been his from infancy, and which expressed itself in that wonderful sweetness, which makes us invoke him as *Pie Pater Dominice*, ' Compassionate Father, S. Dominic. Now this is the special loveliness of his character.' Very strong souls are generally serene. What produces excitement, passion, and disturbance, is not strength, but weakness. It is the overflow of some human, unmortified element. But the majestic strength of the Saints, and of our holy Father in particular, had that stamp of serenity which likens them to the angels.

" And that is what we should bear in mind, and strive to imitate in all our active work. Be as zealous and as active as we may, we cannot rival those heavenly spirits who ' rest not day nor night ' from their labours, and who are like burning flames and consuming fires in the service of their Lord. But they do it all in the peace of an unruffled serenity, and this serenity is itself one of the secrets of their strength.

"We are all probably conscious of the great power which a calm tranquillity of manner in another exerts over us. It is one of the qualities which most imposes on children and gives command.

"And it is this which enters into the epithet of the 'Rose of Patience,' which we bestow on our holy Father; for patience, beside the part which it takes in the virtue of penance, is that which holds the whole nature in command and keeps it tranquil.

"Let us then aim at acquiring more of this chief beauty of our holy Father's spirit and character, that, whilst we try and follow in his footsteps in all that regards our love of perishing souls, we may never lose that possession of our own souls in patience, which will keep us in peace and sweetness.

"It was this patience which enabled him to bear all things—the contradictions of sinners, the deferring of his own hopes, the perpetual struggle with an evil world, with that undisturbed tranquillity, which gave him so close a resemblance to his Lord and Master. I really do not know any point in which we could better try and imitate him than in this. It would make our work and our lives so much more God-like, and therefore so much more full of power and strength."

1889.

"From the cradle to the grave, the path of our holy Father is full of light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. The beauty of his soul is never clouded, never disturbed; it always bears the stamp of that serenity which, one may say, is his distinguishing characteristic. There is no quality that attracts love like this. It is the perpetual blue sky of the human soul, and indicates the presence of God, always shining there as its sun. . . . In part, of course, it was a natural gift;

but it drew its perfection from his spirit of prayer. In this he is our great example. No life could be more laborious than his: always journeying, teaching, preaching; and yet he was ever in prayer. He prayed by day and by night, by the roadside, even in the forest, where he was found kneeling with the savage wolves howling around him. We know something of his favourite method of prayer, how he liked to use verses from the Psalms, and how constantly he meditated on the Gospels, which he carried in his bosom. He would say, 'Let us think a little of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And then he would walk on in silence, entertaining himself with the company of our Lord.

"Here is our example, a life of prayer in the midst of a life of labour. This was the life of our holy Father; and it seems in its degree to be the life to which we, his children, are all of us called. The difficulty we have to deal with is how to unite prayer and work, so as not to let the work swallow us up. And we see that the way he dealt with it was by making prayer his daily atmosphere: not something kept for choirs or set times, but the centre to which his heart turned as he walked by the way, wherever he was and whatever he was doing.

"Living in this atmosphere lifted him above all those things which vex and disturb the soul. If we found ourselves on the top of a high mountain, we should lose sight of a thousand objects which remind us here below of all the jarring of humanity. And, the more we live in prayer, the more, in like manner, we forget and lose sight of things that bring vexation and trouble, and so preserve our serenity.

"If we really possessed the spirit of prayer, we should find ways, and means, and times for exercising it which otherwise would escape our notice: and it would transform our whole lives and our whole interior, and make the dry and dusty paths of daily duty sweet and odoriferous as a garden."

1891.

"Theologians tell us that there is no circumstance in our lives that has not been ordered from all eternity by God, and directed by Him to help us to our final end. If this is true even of lesser things, it must surely apply to all that is connected with our vocation; and so it cannot be a thing indifferent that we should have been chosen to be the children of one of the greatest princes in God's court, enjoying an intimacy so great and privileged with his Divine Master, as in some special way to be called His 'Friend.'

"What a great and precious thing friendship is, even that of an imperfect creature! Holy Scripture numbers it among the chief blessings of life. A friend is in some ways more than a brother. The ties of blood are indeed very strong; but they may, or may not, be accompanied with special sympathy. But a friend is one chosen out of thousands, to whom we give our entire confidence, on whom we can always reckon, who always bears with us and understands us, when we can hardly bear with ourselves. Truly, it is said that a faithful friend is the medicine of life—a faithful friend, for fidelity is the special virtue we look for in him.

"Think, then, what it is to have Jesus Christ for such a friend—faithful even unto death—and think how bounden we should be to render back His fidelity. This was certainly the grace of our holy Father's life; he earned it by having his heart so full of our Lord that they were never parted.

"This certainly was a wonderful privilege, but not more wonderful than that which we enjoy. We are the spouses of Christ; that is to say, He has chosen us and given to us a closeness of relationship to Himself, which implies the very perfection of friendship. But, if friends are expected to be faithful, much more is fidelity the mark of a spouse: fidelity to our vows, to our Rule, to our inspirations, to our graces, to the duties of our office, to the interior attraction which is the call of God to each one.

" Just at this time, when we are all making or about to make our annual retreats, I can imagine no subject so fruitful for us to take with us as this of fidelity ; God's fidelity to us, to give us confidence ; our want of fidelity to Him, to weep over it and lovingly to repair it.

" *Nos junge beatis !* ' Join us to the Blessed ! ' When we see dear and holy souls hastening to their end and think that in a few days or hours they will be ' numbered with the Saints in glory everlasting,' everything else seems to vanish away, and our hearts' desire is contained in that prayer, ' *Nos junge beatis !* ' If we have lived in the company of God's servants in this world, may we not hope to be joined with them in the next !

" The day will come when the poor husk of our mortality, with all its weakness and imperfection, will fall away, and the soul, in all the beauty of Divine grace, will be joined to the company of the blessed ; a company made up of so many that are dear to us—our Mothers, our Sisters, our patron Saints, S. Dominic, S. Catherine, and all the white-robed fellowship of the Order. Is it not an overwhelming joy to think that we have an eternity to spend in their company before the throne of God ?

" May this joy be yours, my dear Sisters, now and ever."

1893.

" What a Father S. Dominic was ! All his life was one long combat with nature. From his cradle to his grave, he gave it no mercy or repose. Blessed Jordan, who wrote his life, says that in this respect he is certainly far above our powers to imitate in degree, and that he must have been helped by some special grace, such as we cannot expect to receive.

" No doubt it was so, but this is not the whole account of the matter. Grace is one thing, and fidelity to it is another. We too have had our moments of special grace: in Retreat perhaps or at Holy Communion, to which had we been faithful, there is no saying where God might not have led us. But we got tired of the conflict; the sensible feeling cooled; and we did not feel equal to rouse our wills. Nature pleaded for a little rest, and so we gave in and let her resume her sway, and all went on as before. So we live in a series of alternations of hot and cold, and nothing much comes of our sensible fervour.

"But this was not our holy Father's way. He kept on at the work he had begun. When nature cried out, as we may be sure it did at times, he gave it no mercy but drove it out with a pitchfork.

"I don't now speak of his 'inexpressible penances,' for certainly they are above our possibilities, but rather of what is very different, his mortified life. Mortification is not quite the same thing as penance. It is the putting to death of corrupt nature, with all those humours and inclinations of which the Catechism speaks, and which are at the root of all sin and imperfection.

"The fruit of our holy Father's mortified life was that profound interior peace, that matchless serenity, which communicated itself to all who approached him. If we do not share it, if at times we suffer from moodiness, and discontent, and trouble, and bitterness, we may hold it for certain that we have been giving way to nature in one form or another. Who can expect to be overflowing with sweet joy if she suffers nature to be all alive within her? if she permits in herself criticisms or murmuring, uncharitable thoughts, or rash judgments, selfishness, or sharp words? If we suffer such things to be, no amount of disciplines or hair-shirts will make us saints or entitle us to be called mortified. If you will read the 19th chapter of our holy Father's life, you will see that it tells you, not only of his mighty penances, but that he was 'humble and benign, tender and cheerful, meek, affable, and compassionate, and the sovereign consoler of his brethren.' Here are points within our power to try and imitate; and, if we do so, believe me, it will bring a great wave of joy and sweetness into our hearts.

"In these things he traced out for us the character of a true religious, a true Dominican; and here are the footsteps in which he calls us to follow. We cannot do so without mortification, for we must be mortified in order to be patient with others or sweet and cheerful in ourselves. No doubt it all implies a hard and persevering combat; but the fruit will be peace, the best and sweetest gift we can enjoy in this world."

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

"*August* 14, 1885.

"In wishing you a very happy feast on this, the greatest of our Lady's solemnities, my mind naturally turns to the approaching joy, which we shall all feel in seeing our little sanctuary dedicated to her and to the holy angels.[1]

"*Exaltata es sancta Dei Genitrix, super choros Angelorum,* 'Thou art raised up, O Holy Mother of God, above the choirs of angels.' It will be during her octave that we shall take possession of our new choir and enthrone her in the midst of it May she ever watch over it and us, and truly take us all under her patronage!

"The Assumption, the most glorious of her feasts, is always associated with the thought and the prayer for a happy death. That, we trust, will be for all of us our glorious mystery, the passage from darkness to light, and from weary waiting to everlasting rest.

"But, as with our Lord, so also with her, and so with each of us, we have to suffer and be patient, and 'so, to enter into glory.'

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[1] The consecration of the Church of our Lady of Angels and S. Peter, at Stoke, took place on August 19 of this year.

"Our dear Lady had many things to go through before she celebrated her glorious espousals: the Seven Dolours had to precede the Assumption. She had to seek her Divine Son, sorrowing; to be parted from Him, whilst others, to outward seeming, were preferred before her, to stand beneath His Cross, and to see Him laid in the Sepulchre. What does all this say to us, except that we too must be patient, and work out the allotted portion of our lives for as long a time, and under as many trials as our Master may ordain, and wait for the blessed hour which shall unveil His face, in abandonment to His Holy Will.

"A faithful life is the sure passport to a happy death, and you know we place both life and death under our Lady's patronage, when we ask her to pray for us now and at the hour of our death. May she indeed hear that oft-repeated prayer, and accept us as her true children; and may she bring us to that happy *now* of eternal life, when we shall be satisfied with the vision of God for ever!"

"*August* 13, 1885.

"The Dolours had to be gone through before the feast of the Assumption could be kept. In them our Blessed Lady earned that exceeding weight of merit which was crowned with an exceeding weight of glory. No mere human creature will ever have the fulness of joy which she has inherited, because no one could say, as she did, 'Behold, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!' And so, as ever, we see that the measure of her patience was the measure of her reward.

"This is what she says to us from her starry throne: 'Suffer patiently, suffer sweetly, suffer joyfully, with great and loving hearts; then you will enter into glory.'"

"*August* 13, 1886.

"I wish you every joy and good gift on the approaching feast of our Blessed Lady, when we have the happiness of contemplating her, not as the Mother of sorrows, sacrificing all that was dear to her heart for our sakes, but in her glory, reaping her immense reward, crowned Queen of heaven and earth, and reunited to her Divine Son, from whom she had consented, for our sakes and the sake of the Church, to be separated for fifteen long years.

" We invoke our Lady among other titles as ' Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.' Succour means more than help. If we saw a fierce dog attacking a little child, or a poor, infirm old man, we should not merely help them, but we should *fly* to their help and drive *it* away. Just so, our Lady is ready at all times to fly to our rescue, if we do but invoke her, as a mother darts forward to protect her child. A child is never frightened if its mother is near, if it is in her arms, or if she is holding it by the hand. It knows, with the certainty of confidence, that she will die rather than any harm should befall her little one. This is just what we ought to feel regarding our blessed Lady.[1] It explains what is meant by the saying of S. Bernard, that ' a servant of Mary cannot be lost.' There is nothing she cannot and nothing she will not do for us. She is the Mother of Perpetual Succour. Sometimes, when we are cast down and discouraged at the thought of our own perpetual failures and infidelities, it will re-animate our courage to think of our dear Lady thus longing after us and desiring to have us ; to think of her always at hand, always going about trying to find some new way of helping us, like the woman in the Gospel, who lighted a candle and swept the house diligently to find—not a diamond or a piece of gold, but a poor, miserable little groat that she had lost.

" We are that groat, worth much less than a farthing. Who would take so much time to find a farthing ? But our Mother does not grudge the trouble, if only she can find us; and she rejoices over us, when she has found us, calling the angels to rejoice with her over the poor worthless little groat which she had lost.

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[1] These thoughts were suggested by a beautiful meditation, given by Rev. Father Bridgett, on our Blessed Lady.

"I hope you will not think me too presumptuous, if I make the Apostle's beautiful words my own also, as I pray that the graces of these retreats may be lasting and their fruits very great, and say for myself, as your Mother also, 'that God is my witness how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; and pray that your charity may abound more and more, that you may approve the better things, and may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ.'"[1]

"*August* 14, 1893.

"At this time of retreat, I know every one is much occupied with self-examination and good resolutions; but for once, let us have done with self in every form, and look forward to the blessed end which awaits us.

"Every day, as we say the Fourth Glorious Mystery of the Rosary, we offer it for a happy death; and S. Alphonsus says that, if we constantly pray for that grace, it is infallibly certain we shall obtain it.

"But a happy death is only the door to a happy life—life everlasting, as the Assumption is followed by the Coronation.

"S. Gregory the Great was preaching once on Good Shepherd Sunday, and he addressed the people as God's sheep, seeking the eternal pastures. 'Long for heaven,' he said, 'for to long for heaven is to travel thither. You are the sheep of a heavenly Shepherd, and His pastures are above in the everlasting joy of the ever-green Paradise of God; and it is to that heavenly country that you must lift up your hearts, where there are awaiting you the choirs of the angels, the fellowship of the Saints, the satiety of eternal delight, and the revealed face of God.'

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[1] Philip. i. 8–10.

" To these things, then, let us lift up our hearts, putting away all discouragement at the memory of our own black miserable selves and our black miserable past, but constantly strengthening ourselves in hope and confidence, and asking our Blessed Lady to obtain for us a great increase in both, together with that of which she is the special patroness, final perseverance, and a happy death ! "

FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY

" *October* 3, 1884.

" I am sure that we have all rejoiced together at the good news, that, through the pious zeal of the Holy Father, the month of the Rosary is once more to be kept over the whole world, as it was last year ; and all, no doubt, are prepared to take part in it with fervour and devotion.

"The year will now be blessed with two months of Mary, the one bringing us the spring flowers of holy resolutions, and the other bidding us lay up the ripe harvest of something accomplished for God. In May, we are occupied with the privileges of our Blessed Lady, as she is the Immaculate Virgin, the handmaid of the Lord, and the most perfect of all pure creatures ; whilst October gives her to us associated with the mysteries of the Divine Life, from whose joys, sorrows, and glories she can never be disunited.

" A Divine yet a human life ! This is the wonderful spectacle which is revealed to us in the Holy Rosary. Human life can never be other than a subject of intense interest to us. Always before us, around us, and within us, we are, in one way or other, continually engaged with its perplexing problems, its ardent aspirations, and its humiliating disappointments. Many of us pass our days teaching and training little children ; and such know well enough what alternations they go through, of love for those little souls in their innocence, and distress at their waywardness and imperfections. Others, who visit the poor and the sick, know not a little of the weakness of souls, and enter sometimes with the most intense sympathy into all that goes to secure the penitence of a sinner and a happy death. One way or another, we are all busy with the history of human life ; and, deeply as we love it, because we must love souls, we know every day, more and more, what a weak, inconsistent, and imperfect thing it is.

"That such a thing could ever be set before us, neither weak nor imperfect, but Divine ! That would indeed be a revelation which is laid open to us to be gazed at, and studied in its least detail in the life of our Lord—in the mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

"To those who love the Holy Rosary (and which of us does not love it ?), its mysteries are always reappearing in the words of Holy Scripture, illuminating them with their many-coloured rays, like a beautiful landscape seen through a rainbow.

"There we see the tender blue of the Sacred Infancy, when the Holy Child is never separated from His Immaculate Mother ; the deep blood-red of the Passion, shedding its ruby tinge on all the Sorrowful Mysteries ; and the golden gleam of the Glorious Mysteries, leading us up to the very throne of God, and the 'consummation of all things.'

"Nor can it be fancy which seeks and finds our Divine Lord in all the words of Holy Writ, as in the forms of created things. 'For in Him were all things created, both in heaven and in earth, and He is in all, and before all, and by Him all things exist.'

"We do well, therefore, in all things to seek for 'the Mysteries of His Life, Death, and Resurrection' ; and, as children of the Holy Rosary, to 'imitate what they contain,' that we may also 'obtain what they promise.'

May He Himself teach us this Divine Secret, and on this dear and sacred festival, increase in us very much that grace of Divine charity, which will abide with us for ever, when faith has given place to vision, and hope to fruition."

"Another month of October to remind us of the Rosary and of the holy angels, two distinct devotions, yet two that very naturally blend together ; for in which of the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary are the angels absent ? They have their share in the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Agony, the Resurrection, Ascension, Assumption, and Coronation. Everywhere we find them the heralds of the Incarnation, the ministers of the Incarnate Word and His Blessed Mother in their mortal lives, and their attendants and courtiers in their ineffable glories of heaven.

"And so we may quite naturally link the two devotions together, and ask the holy angels to be our guides and teachers, as, during this month of benediction, we meditate on the Mysteries of the life of our Divine Lord.

"And what a gift, what a grace it is that we have this Divine life so constantly set before us ! It was a human life all the time ; we may sit and watch it through all its phases : the Holy Child in the carpenter's shop ; the Man, standing in the synagogue, among His fellow-townsmen, and reading to them aloud on the Sabbath-day ; the Master, walking with his disciples through the cornfields, or out on the storm-tossed lake in S. Peter's little boat ; the Teacher, sitting on the mountain-side with the multitudes all around Him, uttering the Beatitudes ; the tired Traveller, resting by Jacob's Well ; the Friend, who loved Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, and who sat and conversed with them. We may multiply such pictures, all so familiar to our hearts and so human in their beauty ; and then comes the blessed thought, this life in all its outward circumstances, so ordinary and every-day, as people may have thought it, was a Divine life: each act, each word, each little gesture, the act and word of God.

"There has, then, been a Divine life lived on this earth. And when we are weary and disgusted, I will not say with the world, but with ourselves and our own miseries, it is a refreshment to turn to that life, and 'draw waters of joy out of the fountains of the Saviour.' This is just what the Rosary helps us to do. What have we, any of us, to look to, but alternations of joy and sorrow in this world, and, by God's mercy, glory and beatitude in the next. These three things make up human life now and hereafter; and they made up the Rosary of the Life of Christ. If only we can learn to rejoice in Him, to suffer with Him, that we may be crowned with Him, for ever!

"And do not let us be cold or languid in offering the devotions of this month for the needs of the Church, as the Holy Father invites us to do. Did we know a thousandth part of the iniquities that are overflooding society, we should pray, like our holy mother S. Catherine, that we might be permitted to sweat blood, in order to wash them away. One can hardly exchange a word with those who are in the world, or take up any of its publications, without having proof that it is just apostatising from God—not merely offending Him, but doing what it can to blot out the thought and memory of Him from among men. Certainly we should all make acts of fervent faith to atone for this frightful state of things; and the Rosary is from beginning to end such an act of faith, if we say it heartily and attentively.

"Our Lady's Rosary, with its three different kinds of Mysteries, is compared by the Saints to the rose, which surpasses all other flowers, by combining all the qualities they can separately boast—beauty, sweet odour, and medicinal virtue; for in the Rosary we have the beauty of the joyful mysteries, the healing of the sorrowful, and the exquisite perfume of the glorious.

"Surely some special grace and sweetness will be in store for the hour of death for those who have in life been faithful in recommending that moment to the protection of the Queen of Heaven ! ' now and at the hour of our death.'

" The only two moments on which any human creature can reckon we place under her protection. May she guard us *now*, by obtaining the grace which each one needs at this moment, and *then*, by that final and most precious of all the graces, which we look for from her maternal hands, ' the grace of final perseverance ! ' "

1888.

" The more one hears of the sin and misery which seem to reign in the world outside, the more one desires to plant a garden of these precious roses of prayer, and to keep them fresh and odoriferous, to yield some sweet odour to our Lord by way of compensation.

" This thought has come before me often lately, when hearing rumours of all kinds of terrible crimes that have been committed in London, and which seem to indicate depths of wickedness only worthy of a heathen country. How can we hope to stem such a torrent of evil by our poor little works ? But still our convents are rose-gardens in the midst of a spiritual wilderness ; and you may rescue souls by your ' Hail Maries,' which could never be reached by any other means.

" Some faint knowledge of the corruption of a world ' lying in wickedness ' will make us sensible of the responsibility we have in this matter, and give a force and earnestness to our pleading each time we say, ' Pray for us sinners.'

" We must remember that these poor souls know nothing of the sweetness and beauty of the Divine mysteries ; that the white roses of our Lady's immaculate purity have never been displayed to them, nor the red roses of her unfailing charity. And you must do what you can to make them known among the children, that they, at any rate, may not grow up in utter ignorance of the mysteries of their redemption.

"You will, with us, be making many visits to the Rosary altar to-morrow, praying for the release of the dear, suffering souls. Let me propose to you that, at each visit, you ask each soul relieved for the conversion of one sinner. So we may, perhaps, reap a double harvest and gain another crown for our Lady, which will be very precious to her heart."

1889.

"Our beautiful Rosary feast has, this year, received another increase of devotion from the fact that the Holy Father has extended the use of its special office to the entire Church. Henceforth the hymns we love so dearly will be sung by all the faithful; and a new Gospel, that of the Annunciation, will be said by us also instead of the former one.

"It is not without a special and very beautiful significance that this Gospel is chosen. It contains the formula of the *Ave Maria;* and the words of the Angel Gabriel contain also, if you examine them, what we may call an allusion to each division of the Sacred Mysteries:—

"'Thou shalt conceive and bear a Son' (Joyful Mysteries): 'and thou shalt call His name Jesus,' that is, Saviour (Sorrowful); 'and He shall reign over the house of Jacob' (Glorious). It is but another way of reminding us that the Holy Rosary is a compendium of the Gospel, from which it derives all its wonderful power.

"Our Blessed Lady is reputed to have said to Blessed Allan, that her Psalter would 'renew the world in ruins.' Truly is the world in ruins at this time: faith is waxing faint and charity growing cold. When it has come to this, that men do not fear to declare themselves followers of the evil one and to carry his banner through the streets of the Holy City, it looks like the triumph of

Anti-Christ and the setting up of the 'abomination of desolation.'

"But we know that the final triumph is not to be for Satan, but for God; and in this very hour the Church rouses herself to give more glory to Him and more honour to His Blessed Mother, through the means of the Holy Rosary.

"Let us then take part, with all our hearts, in the work of reparation, and pray, through this precious month, first for the Church and all the intentions of the Holy Father, and then for ourselves, and all our own needs, spiritual and temporal. . . . We need prayer, much prayer, and very earnest prayer, to help us to cling closer to our religious obligations, to shut out more entirely the spirit of the world, and to deepen and strengthen within our hearts all those religious instincts, the preservation of which is as needful as the Rule itself, and which alone will make us love and understand the value of the Rule."

1889.

"It is said that our Lord Himself, when on earth, used to salute His holy Mother with the words, *Ave, gratia plena*, 'Hail, full of grace!' We can well believe it true, and if so, we shall be praying in His own words when we repeat the 'Hail, Mary,' as we pray His own prayer in the 'Our Father.'

"And so we will ever salute them both together in the true *verbum bonum*, the 'good word,' of Catholic lips, the *Ave Maria*, which invokes both their sacred Names, which is itself so sublime an act of Catholic faith, which asks for all our needs for time and eternity, which reminds us that we are nothing but poor sinners, and which is a daily preparation for the hour of death.

"If you have read the Holy Father's last Encyclical Letter, you will need nothing more to reanimate your devotion and love for the Holy Rosary; and it will make you feel how great a privilege it is to have such a precious means of grace placed in our hands.

" We read wonderful things of the love which some of the Saints of our Order had for the 'Hail Mary,' and the fidelity with which they repeated it. They were certainly not 'vain repetitions': they were conscious of the singular sweetness and power of those words, which can never be uttered without an act of faith in the Incarnation of the Son of God. . . . When the angel saluted our Lady, he did not call her 'Mary'; he called her 'full of grace'; as if those words expressed her better than a name. . . . And, indeed, one may say that, when we think of her, grace seems precisely the word which expresses her. In this world there is nothing so precious and nothing so beautiful as grace. We need only remember that in heaven it will be changed into glory to understand this. Grace makes us like God. Without it we are dead; with it we live the life of God, and are made partakers of His nature. If we could see a soul clothed in Divine grace, we should see a sight to which no beauty on earth could compare; just as, if we could see a soul deprived of it, we should see a most horrible deformity, too shocking to look at. One degree of grace, if it could be put before us in a tangible form, would outweigh and outshine the costliest jewel.

" And our Lady was 'full of grace'! The waves of that great sea had flowed into every faculty of her soul. Will, memory, understanding and imagination were all steeped in it; not a movement nor an impulse that was not inspired by grace; so that she was 'all fair,' and there was 'not a spot' in her.

" How beautiful, then, she must have been in soul and body, and how exquisite a joy it is to think of that beauty! For there is a peculiar delight in dwelling on beauty, even if it be only that of a glorious sunset. But there is no beauty like that of a beautiful soul. When, in our intercourse with others, we come across little gleams of grace, we are filled with a sense of beauty which causes us the most exquisite delight. Yet, for the most part, these are hidden among many weaknesses and imperfections. But with our Lady it was all grace: not a weakness or imperfection was there; so that it is a perfect joy and rest to the soul only to think of her and to draw into our hearts the sense of her spiritual beauty, as we may do each time we say our Rosary.

"May our Lady, out of the fulness that is in her, obtain for each of us to comprehend more and more of the 'length and breadth, and depth and height' of this great gift of grace, that we may be filled with the 'fulness of Christ'!"

1893.

"In the beautiful Encyclical which the Holy Father has just published, and which, I dare say, you will be reading to-day, he speaks of the Rosary as applying a remedy to three great evils of the age: its growing contempt for a poor, laborious life; its dread of suffering; and its forgetfulness of the things of eternity. He sees in the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries the ideals of these truths, which are fast fading out of the memory of the world, the loveliness of a life of labour, in imitation of the hidden life of our Lord; the sanctifying blessedness of suffering, when borne in union with His sacred Passion; and the lifting up of our hearts and souls to the unseen world, in the hope of life eternal.

"Thanks be to God, these are not things which it is possible for us to forget. But it is certain that the faithful use of the Rosary will impress them on us more and more deeply. Among the endless ways in which we may adapt the Rosary, there is one by which it seems to take us through all the stages of our life, from birth to death, linking each age with some mystery of our Lord's life. We live over again the innocent days of childhood; then comes middle life, with all its cares and trials; for, to each one, sooner or later, life becomes a way of the Cross; and then, when the Cross has sanctified us and the Holy Spirit has transformed us, there come the crowning mercies of a happy death and the opening gates of Paradise!

"Now, to us religious, all this has a very special meaning. That life of hidden, humble labour, which the Holy Father commends, is truly the life to which we are called. Your labours, my dear Sisters, are all very humble, very hidden. They make no show in the world. Perhaps you hardly value them yourselves at their proper worth. It is possible you may at times be inclined to think that our Communities do very little, compared to the great and noble works accomplished by other religious bodies. All the time, the angels are counting your steps to and from school, up and down the stairs of the Orphanage, or whithersoever obedience calls you. Angels are counting your words as you teach the Catechism, and noting every hour of weariness of mind or body. They reckon every victory over self, every stitch of your needle, every stroke of your pen.

"Then, as to the sufferings—well, they come to us, or will come to us all, in larger or smaller measure; but come they must; and we must learn to regard them as priceless treasures. They will do for us what nothing else can do, they will supernaturalise us and make us like our Beloved: they will imprint His image on us and will burn away the likeness of the old Adam.

"Then, when suffering has done its work, the Holy Spirit will make us new creatures and prepare us for a happy death. Our Lady of the Rosary will obtain for us, let us hope, the great gift of final perseverance, and then the gates will open at last, and admit us into Paradise.

"Pardon, Perfection, Perseverance, Paradise! What career on earth can compare with this? Can anything be more splendid and desirable than such a life, hidden away among the secret things of God, unknown and despised by the world, hidden even from ourselves !

" I do hope the day will never come when we shall grow ashamed or tired of being poor and little in the eyes of the world, and want to do greater things than are given us to do. What we do, let us do for God only, casting the tiny seed into the ground, and waiting for the day when we shall reap the glorious harvest, and enter into life, ' bearing our sheaves with us.'

" May our lives, then, in this way, bear on them the stamp of the Rosary and its delicious mysteries, and may they be ever fragrant with the thought and memory of Jesus and Mary, that to Jesus and His Mother we may be united in life and in death ! "

ON ALL SAINTS

" *October* 30, 1882.

" I am sure that all our hearts will meet together on the glorious solemnity of All Saints, which we are preparing to celebrate, and that we shall be all exchanging many good wishes one with another, as we sing the praises of those whose ' names are written in heaven,' and dwell on the thought of their beauty and their blessedness. That which makes them blessed now is the presence of God, that is, beatitude.

" That which made them blessed on earth was poverty, meekness, justice, patience, and suffering. We have our Lord's own words for this in His eight Beatitudes. But it only made them blessed, because it united them to God ; for, apart from Him, there can be no beatitude, as there can be no sanctity. ' For us,' says the Abbé Gay, ' sanctity consists in adhering to God : it is to be so penetrated with His grace, so full of His life, so illuminated by His light, so in love with His will, so dependent on His government, so conformed to His mind, so given over to

His dominion, so devoted to His interests, so docile to His good pleasure, as that we become wholly possessed by Him and live no longer but in Him alone.'

" These are beautiful words; but they may all be summed up in one little word. They are but a picture, and a feeble and incomplete picture, of something which our heart understands very well, even if our tongue cannot describe it.

" They mean simply that we are made saints by love. For it is love, and love alone, that knows how to adhere to God, to be conformed to Him, to be swallowed up in Him, to forget one's self in Him, to do all things for His sake, and to desire Him alone as our eternal reward.

" May the secret of this wonderful love reveal itself, more and more, to all our hearts; so that, after its exercise has made us blessed here below, its enjoyment may form our bliss in heaven, by uniting us for ever with the God of all sanctity!

" Sense is so strong in all of us, and the things of sense do so press upon and beguile us, that it is a good thing to have our attention powerfully fixed on things invisible, as is done in these coming solemnities of All Saints and All Souls. For, if we are to be saints, it can only be by being lifted above the claims of flesh and blood, and the mere life of nature, and natural inclinations, wishes, and repugnances. We can hardly do this for ourselves; and so our dear Lord steps in, and in the course of His Divine Providence supplies to the souls whom He loves and wills to sanctify, ' the deep heart-crossings sternly kind,' the thwarting of our desires, and the grinding down of our pride, which are grievous at the time; ' but afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it the most peaceable fruit of justice' (Heb. xii. 11).

" What we want is, first, the eye of faith to discern His gracious hand in all these things, and in the changes and chances of mortal life, all designed by Him; and, secondly, the generous and courageous heart, which raises itself to take all He gives, and to bless Him, not only for what He gives, but for what He takes away. If we do this, and in proportion as we do it, we enter into the supernatural; and, in place of natural consolation, there comes into our heart that greater and profounder peace, which is so exquisitely described in the prayer of Blessed Bartholomew of Breganza: *Pax tua quæ exsuperat omnem sensum*, 'the peace which surpasses sense.'

"The world is always making great mistakes; but there is no mistake more profound than that by which its followers persuade themselves that people are happy in proportion as they have the natural desires of their hearts fulfilled. There is a happiness which comes from detachment, of which the world knows nothing. The Psalmist alludes to it, when, after describing those who have all which this world can give them, he adds, 'They have called the people happy that hath such things; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord' (Ps. cxliii. 15).

"This is the sum of the whole matter: our happiness consists in this, that we have God for our Lord. We belong to Him, and He condescends to belong to us. If, on the one hand, we can say that we are 'the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand,' in the very same verse we proclaim that He is 'the Lord our God.' The changes and chances of this world cannot touch this great anchorage of our hearts; it abides like a great rock, when everything of human sweetness and tenderness has been swept away.

"Therefore, my dearest Sisters, what I pray that God may grant us all, now and ever, is great, magnanimous hearts, content to take Him for our portion and to ask for nothing more. We need not fear that, having Him, we shall ever suffer want. 'The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good' (Ps. xxxiii. 11).

"As He has cared in all ages for His saints, and cared for them most when they were most stripped of earthly comfort, so will He care for us also, and lead us by those secret paths, known to Him alone, which will guide us most surely to life everlasting."

"*October* 30, 1891.

"A very happy feast to you on what dear Mother Margaret liked to remind us was not only a feast, but a 'high day.' We have lost the distinction now; but in old Catholic England, as now in Belgium, there were some holidays—Christmas, Easter, and All Saints—which were 'high days,' on which English kings wore their crowns.

"All Saints seems to gather up in itself so many thoughts of sanctity and its reward, that we need not wonder it was chosen out for the highest rank. It takes us altogether away from earth, and leads us to those green meadows where we see the servants of God resting after their labours among the verdant pastures of eternity.

"So our Lord describes them as entering by the door, and 'going in and out' and 'finding pasture.' And one of the Prophets likens them to sheep lying on the green grass and feeding in rich pastures. This image of eternity and its rewards is a very favourite one with spiritual writers.

"'In heaven,' says one, 'the Saints will go in by the vision of God's interior works. They will find pasture, because final beatitude will ever be satisfying them with good things, in which they will both rest and feed. And it is not said that the servant of God shall meet with these pastures, but that he shall find (*inveniet*) them, because we only find that which we have sought for. And the Saints find these delightful pastures in heaven, because on earth they have sought for them, by the practice of humility, and penance, and mortification.'

"But our Lord, as the Good Shepherd, gives us pastures even in the days of our pilgrimage. 'He sets us in a place of pasture,' as we read in Psalm xxii., by placing us in the midst of all the holy ordinances we enjoy in the Church, and specially in holy religion. Prayer and meditation are such pastures, and still more the Sacraments. Certainly we, if any, can truly be numbered among those who ' go in and out and find pasture.' We ' go in ' by contemplation ; we ' go out ' by active works ; and all this is but a foreshadowing of the final beatitude for which we were created.

" In some of the old Roman basilicas, this beatitude is represented under the very figure of which we have been speaking. You see in the roof over the altar a painting, a mosaic, in which our Lord, as the Lamb of God, stands on a mound, from which streams of water flow down into green meadows ; and there, standing around Him, or lying on the grass, are the sheep of His fold, at rest, with all their desires satisfied to the full, with their eyes fixed on Him, whom to know is life eternal, and whose presence is itself their beatitude.

" My dearest sisters, let us encourage ourselves to struggle on with our little trials and difficulties, for a few more brief years, whilst we set before us the sweetness of that great Sabbath of eternity, when we shall rest, if it so please God, among His Saints, and share the exceeding greatness of their joy.

" All the coming month of November speaks to us, in one way or another, of the invisible world. It draws our thoughts away from sense, and reminds us that the things that are seen and felt are but temporal, and the things that are not seen are eternal.

" May those eternal joys be ours, which ' eye has not seen, nor the heart of man conceived,' but which await us in the vision of Him who, when we behold Him, will fulfil our heart's desire ! "

ON ALL SAINTS OF THE ORDER

" *November* 9, 1883.

" I preferred reserving my good wishes for All Saints, until we should be celebrating the feast of those of our own Order, which seems more specially to remind us of our close tie with all those blessed friends of God. May we one day be of their number in heaven, as we have been of their company on earth ; and most surely, as they helped us living by their examples, they will also now help us by their prayers.

" To my mind there is no sweeter way of regarding the Saints than as God's chosen friends. A friend is one who sympathises with another, and enjoys his confidence, and is ready to live and die for him. Such the Saints are towards God. The first who bore the special title of the 'Friend of God' was Abraham ; and there seems to have been one particular occasion when it was given him. It was when he had given the last and extremest proof of his love and devotion to God by the sacrifice of his son. Does not this indicate the chief way by which we may win the same privilege, and in our turn become the friends of God ?—sacrifice and confidence, generosity in giving to God whatever is dear to us, and confidence in Him that all He does is right, and that He Himself can be all to us, our 'exceeding great reward'? The lives of all the Saints may be summed up in this : they loved God, and trusted Him, and gave themselves to Him, because He had given Himself to them. This, after all, is only the description of perfect friendship."

On another All Saints' Day, after speaking of the utter opposition of the Spirit of the world to the Spirit of Christ and His Saints, and the work that the thought of the Last Judgment does in destroying the Spirit of the world, Mother F. Raphael concludes : " So, now, at this holy time, which speaks to us of all that is invisible, let us ask of the dear Saints, whose children we are (to use the words of Tobias), to give us an utter distaste for all that this world can give, that we may rest on the promises of God, on the hope of our calling, on the prize of our high vocation in Christ Jesus, on the perfect judgment of our All-Perfect God, on His unspotted truth and unbounded charity for souls ; and, so resting, may await the hour of our judgment as that which shall also be the signal for our union with Him.

" On Monday, we shall be celebrating our family feast, the feast of all our glorious Saints, those whose names have found a place in the Calendar of the Church and of the Order, and those, too, whose names, unrecorded here below, are yet shining in golden characters on the pages of the Book of Life. By faith they lived ; in faith they died : their works have gone before them, and their memory and example remain.

" There is no sense or meaning in our lives if we do not look forward to joining their company and sharing their reward ; and, if we hope to be united with them in joy eternal, we must be united to them here in spirit and in service, walking in their footsteps and living in their ways.

" Now, one thing is greatly in my heart just now to say to you all. We seem, as a congregation, to have come just to that period in our history which may be a very critical one for good or evil.

" So many have passed, or are passing away, of those on whom our first dear and holy Mother impressed her own spirit, whom she formed and guided under her own eyes. A new generation is springing up ; and it remains to be seen whether they will remain faithful to old traditions, and resolve to follow in the old paths.

" Holy writers tell us that every congregation has what is called its principal spirit, which is the spirit inherited from the founder, who was inspired by the Holy Ghost to give it that special form, and that the well-being of the congregation depends on its loyal adherence to that spirit.

"Now, if we ask what is our principal spirit, I don't think we shall find much difficulty in answering.

"First I should say, a great zeal and love for God's service and His interests above all. He must always come first, and have the best and the most we have to give. In this spirit we voluntarily chose the obligation of the Divine Office, and put our choir duties at the highest level we could. It is the same principle which makes us care for the beauty of God's house. Whatever she gave to God's house, Mother Margaret always regarded as given direct to God.

"Then, secondly, a love and zeal for souls, and above all, the souls of the poor; and this too for the simple reason that God has chosen them to be His representatives. He is present in the Blessed Sacrament and He is present in the poor. What we do for them we do for Him: if we visit them, we visit Him; if we love them, we love Him; if we comfort and minister to them (sweet and blessed truth!) we comfort and minister to Him. It is He himself who has taught us this truth; so that it is of faith, that what we do for them we do for Him, and that this is the condition of our final reward.

"Then I will say, thirdly, we must all work and contend together in concert, to keep the strong tie of union, which, thanks be to God, we still enjoy. At this moment we are singularly one in heart and in mind; and it is so great a blessing, and one so wholly beyond our own deserts, that we ought to cherish a great thankfulness for it, as the gift of God, and at all cost maintain it. I look on these three things as the three great bequests left us by our first Mothers—

"Zeal for God's service.

"Love and work for the poor.

"Mutual union of hearts.

"If we cling to these, we shall not lose the principal spirit of our Congregation. All the graces which are bound up in that spirit will continue to be poured out on us, and the family tie will be unbroken which binds us to the Saints and to one another.

"This, then, is the wish I have in my heart for all of you, on the eve of this beautiful feast; and may our Lord form in us more and more the likeness of our glorious ancestry, and renew in us daily the spirit to which He has been pleassed to call us!"

ADDENDA.

SHORT NOTES

FOR INSTRUCTIONS AND MEDITATIONS

Collected from private Manuscripts of

MOTHER FRANCIS RAPHAEL

(Nihil obstat: F. THOMAS BERGH, O.S.D., *Censor Deputatus*)

ON THE OUR FATHER

INTRODUCTION: God and Heaven. Our Father, and our Home.

1. Place yourself in the presence of God, not as Creator, Judge, or Ruler, but as

FATHER.

On His part, reminding Him of the tie which thus binds us to Him, and as it were, obliges Him to hear us:

On our part, as the motive for unlimited confidence, child-like trust—sentiments of little children towards a good, wise and strong father. And what a father! THE FATHER, "from Whom all paternity is named": that is, all fatherhood is a faint image of this: this alone is the true fatherhood. "Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be, the sons of God." 1 John, iii. 1. Unlimited confidence, then, with filial reverence and fear. Act of Faith.

2. WHO ART IN HEAVEN (Matt. vi. 9).

In heaven, not on earth. The tie is not an earthly one, therefore it will never be broken. It is firm, eternal, unchangeable : a divine Love. Not something belonging to our childhood, a home tie, to be remembered and looked back on sweetly, as a thing of the past ; it belongs to a home that is awaiting us in heaven. For if our Father is in heaven, then heaven is our home, for Home is the House of the Father, and when we are going to the Father's house, we are " going home." A long way or a short, a winding road or a straight one, but we look on, and see Home waiting for us at the end and a Father waiting to welcome us, and to say, " Enter ! " Nothing strange there ; the old faces, the old love.

" Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet *in patria* ! "

1ST PETITION. Hallowed be Thy Name (Matt. vi. 9). God's Glory, our first desire.

The right order. Glory of God before all else. All things else for the sake of that. For the NAME of God is Himself. Hence, pure intention. Also, this sets before us the sanctity, the holiness of God, as the supreme object of love and worship. " Be ye holy, because I the Lord your God am Holy." (Lev. xix. 2.) We pray to understand something more of this sanctity. We hallow His Name by imitating His holiness. Act of Charity.

2ND PETITION. Thy Kingdom come (Matt. vi, 10). The Lord reigneth. He is " a King over all the earth " (Ps. xlvi. 3). He reigns in nature, grace and glory.

Nature : He made heaven and earth ; their beauty and their wonders all from Him. Providence the execution of His royal rule ; " stormy winds which fulfil His word." (Ps. cxlviii. 8).

Grace. An invisible kingdom. " The Kingdom of God is within you " (Luke xvii. 21). His power over the heart. Sacramental government of souls.

Glory. All the saints reigning with Christ in heaven. He, the Head of all things.

Contemplate the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Satan. Our work to extend the Kingdom of God on earth. Every soul gained, every mortal sin prevented ; every good act, or thought, or word procured,—all spreading the Kingdom of God, adding to the number of His subjects.

Look out on the world: all faithful souls; all saints and angels in heaven, rank upon rank, standing round the throne, and casting their crowns to the ground: Thy "Kingdom come" (Matt. vi. 10). Hasten the time when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the covering waters of the sea (Is. xi. 9)—all hearts converted, all sin repaired. Final restoration of all things in Christ. Act of Hope.

3RD PETITION. Thy Will be done (Matt. vi. 10). Not my will, but Thine, be done. Will of God, perfection. Perfect adhesion of our will to God's Will, our sanctification: and this, not only to *endure* it, but to *do* it.

On earth as it is in Heaven. By men, as by the angels. Perfectly, without the least divergence.

What is the Will of God?

Our sanctification.
Our rule.
The duty of the moment.
The cross of the moment.
Our final perseverance.

4TH PETITION. Daily Bread.

Temporal necessities, provided like daily manna. Confidence: only looking for it from day to day. Also, daily needs of the soul—present graces—what every day brings the want of. Living in to-day.

Remembrance of Holy Eucharist.

5TH PETITION. Forgive us our trespasses. What are they? Brief examen. Act of contrition for all. Ask pardon for them every day. The fact that our Lord tells us to do so should assure us of His Will to pardon.

Condition. Forgiveness of others. Charity, kindness, readiness to forgive and forget.

6TH PETITION. Lead us not into temptation (Matt. vi. 13). Lead us out of temptation. Lead us: we shall miss the way unless God leads us. Follow where He leads. The shepherd going before, leading the sheep to pasture. Has He not always led us? Course of divine Providence. Hidden guidance. Dependence on it.

7TH PETITION. But deliver us from evil (Matt. vi. 13). God the Deliverer. What evil? The enemy: worldly difficulties: temptations, within and without. Deliver the Church from the evils that threaten her. Deliver each soul from what most besets her. Deliver us finally from danger of eternal ruin.—Amen.

THE HUMAN HEART

God always regards THE HEART: that is, the interior will and affections. The only thing He cares for: "My son, give Me *thy heart*" (Prov. xxiii. 26). Character of the human heart, apart from divine grace, as it is drawn in Holy Scripture; Perverse, hard, proud, double, unstable.

1. Perverse: "The Heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable; who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9).

"Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts," etc. (Mark vii. 21).

"The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil" (Gen. viii. 21).

2. Hard: "Harden not your hearts" (Ps. xciv. 8).

"Have you still your heart blinded?" (Mark viii. 17).

"All the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and an obstinate heart" (Ezeck. iii. 7).

3. Proud: "With him that had a proud eye and an unsatiable heart I would not eat" (Ps. c. 5).

"The hearts of the children of men are filled with evil" (Eccl. ix. 3).

"Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 5).

"We have heard of the pride of Moab, he is exceeding proud" (Is. xvi. 6).

4. Double; "With a double heart they have spoken" (Ps. xi. 3).

"In simplicity of heart fearing God" (Col. iii. 22).

5. Unstable: "There are many thoughts in the heart of man" (Prov. xix. 21).

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Sam. i. 18).

Against these: The Heart of God.

Perversity: Uprightness, or Justice, the character of the saint.

Hardness: "Be ye kind one to another" (Eph. iv. 32), pitiful, avoiding unkind judgments.

"Thro' the bowels of the mercy of our God" (Luke i. 78).

Pride: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29).

"Oh, ye holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord" (Dan. iii. 87).

Duplicity: "Was called faithful and true" (Apoc. xix. 7).

"Let them commend their souls in good deeds to the faithful Creator" 1 (S. Peter iv. 19). "He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9).

Constant: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). "I am the Lord and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

Our Lord presents His Human Heart, which is also a Divine Heart, as the model for our imitation, perfect in all these characteristics. Holy, tender, meek and humble, single and true, and constant unto eternity. His Heart must reform ours.

ABANDONMENT

There are many words expressive of the same thing, different shades or degrees of the same virtue. Thus, Obedience, Resignation, Acceptance, Acquiescence.

Obedience, beautiful as it is, implies a certain force of command, to which we yield.

Resignation implies a kind of sadness: we resign ourselves to a cross, which yet we regret.

Acceptance: this is more voluntary than resignation. Still, it implies a contract.

Acquiescence: here, indeed, we rise to something higher. To acquiesce in what God ordains is more than to be sadly resigned, or willingly to accept. It is to assent, and *to find rest* in His Will. His Will is the repose of ours. Still something is implied, as going before. There is an act yet more perfect, which is

Abandonment. Abandonment is to give up all, and to give all, without being asked, and without reckoning how much we give. We leave all, and turn away from it.

"They that trust in God shall understand the truth, and they that are faithful in love shall rest in Him" (Wisdom iii. 9). Here is Acquiescence.

"Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee" (Mark x. 28). Here is Abandonment.

It is more than giving. We give a shilling. We abandon our country; all is left behind, renounced, forgotten.

This leads to CON-formity, which ends in *Uni*-formity.

PERSEVERANCE

The great necessity. "But he that shall persevere unto the end he shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22). The great difficulty. So many kinds of false perseverance.

1. To persevere for a time, then relax and give up. (Inconstancy.)

2. To persevere in a fashion for a long time, but tepidly, and without fervour. (Cowardice.)

3. To persevere with a sort of fervour, but make it occasion for vanity or bitter zeal. (Presumption.)

REMEDIES

Against Inconstancy. Be always beginning afresh. Vary your efforts. Perseverance is a connected chain of many separate links; each link a distinct effort.

Against Tepidity or Cowardice. Make a plan. Attempt something definite, but possible, because tepidity will disappear before successful effort.

Against Vanity or Presumption. Reckon your failures. What are your successes worth, except in so far as they are *efforts*? As *results*, worthless.

Never give up. Even when beaten down, rise again; begin again. God's mercies "new every morning." Daily beginnings make daily endings. Faithful in a few things.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

They regulate the whole man; for man's soul is chiefly made up of understanding and will, which are regulated by Prudence and Justice; and his body is subject to two sets of passions, concupiscible and irascible, regulated by Temperance and Fortitude; so that if these four parts of his nature are rightly ordered, his whole being is in right order.

Prudence. The right ordering of the understanding. Specially directs us what to do and what to avoid in all the circumstances of our actions. Much the same thing as discretion, which implies a wise selection, and again, a well-ordered judgment. Its importance; the great difficulty often not in finding courage to do, but in knowing what is the right thing to do. And on the exercise of this judgment of what is right, and what is wrong, how much depends!

Means to obtain it.

1. Prayer. Never decide, never give advice, without prayer—if only a momentary glance to God.

2. Ask advice, and be *ready* to do so. Self-judgment, and pride of judgment, and conceit are the death of prudence.

3. Use experience, even of your own faults and mistakes.

4. Govern the passions. Any one passion that governs you will blind you: this is the origin of prejudice, *i.e.*, the habit of pre-judging a case without reason. Sensuality specially deprives of light.

5. Reflect and deliberate. Do not act in a hurry. First impressions, and second impressions too, should be weighed. Give yourself time to cool. Deliberation is the very soul of

prudence. Put no faith in your intuitions, even if you have them, but test them by counsel and deliberation.

Justice bears the same relation to the will as prudence to the understanding. The main idea is uprightness, singleness of purpose, conscience and duty. Gives to each his due. It asks in all circumstances: "What is the right thing to do?" and when it knows this, it does it. Obedience to law, to rule. Equal measure weighed to all. Opposed to feeling, impulse, preference, passion, as motives of acts. Hence its presence is shown by a love of law; and it is gained and preserved by the practice of fidelity to conscience and to rule.

Fortitude controls the irascible passions. These are the passions which move to anger and all its kindred excesses. Fortitude is the right ordering of these—not their extinction—for it is in itself their perfection. Courage, enterprise, fearlessness, the power of endurance and mortification require the good exercise of the irascible part of our nature. Fortitude does a double work: if we are deficient in courage, it animates us; if we have an excess, it restrains. It is the strength of the soul. Virtue implies strength, and manly strength, either urging forward a flagging nature, or restraining a turbulent one. The command of temper is as much an exercise of fortitude, which keeps down the excited feeling with a strong hand, as is the overcoming of sloth or the endurance of pain. Fortitude in any case does violence to nature. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence" (Matt. xi. 12). It is strength proceeding from a supernatural source. Some things seem, and are called "strong," which in reality are weaknesses, and fortitude has to correct them; *e.g.*, strong nature, strong passions, strong likes and dislikes—all weaknesses *if we cannot overcome them.* "A strong man armed keepeth his court" (Like xi. 21). Patience is an exercise of fortitude. It restrains and chains up anger, and *suffers* in doing so. Martyrdom is an exercise of patience.

Means to acquire it.

1. Prayer: God is our strength.

2. Not to depend on our own strength.

3. Accustom yourself to bear small trials, and resist small attractions. This is the essential condition: *Abstine et sustine.* Empty wishes of no value. Come to real acts.

Temperance. The right ordering of the concupiscible passions. That is, of the love of pleasure. Fortitude deals with pains, temperance with pleasure. A great similarity in their exercise. Temperance implies fortitude; you cannot separate the two.

The Great Command

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength" (Deut. vi. 5).

Love, affective, appreciative, and effective. All that the spiritual man has to do. He must strongly direct his will to God, and that with effort. And with his will, all the powers of his soul. "I will keep my strength to Thee" (Ps. lviii. 10). The strength of a soul is in its powers and passions, governed by the will. If the will directs these to God, it "keeps its strength for God." Contrast the wasting of the strength of the soul on the world—on self!

The Passions are Joy, Hope, Fear and Grief. They all move together, for if we rejoice in a thing, we hope for it, we fear its contrary, we grieve to lose it. And the more these four domineer over the soul, the less it will be fixed in God. Then we rejoice in what is valueless, we fear things we ought to embrace, we grieve when we ought to rejoice. And the will follows in the wake of the passions, dragged after them like a captive. The soul has not kept its strength for God. Such a soul does not certainly love God "with all its strength."

All this shows that what Our Lord means by "the great command" is not a *sentiment.* It is an *act.* But acts imply efforts; no act we do can be done without effort. What goes to make up an act? Consciousness: deliberation: entire liberty of will. Now, to love God with all our strength we must rouse our souls to these three dispositions. But the soul that is governed by its passions, and specially its predominant passion, has lost its liberty.

We see, then, that desires and repugnances make war on this strong love of God. To love Him with all our soul, we must have detachment. When the passions solicit or pull us, we must be able to say, "What does it matter? If I do not get this thing in which I rejoice, if I have to endure this other thing, which flesh and blood fears—what does it matter ? What are these things to me, after all ? " Let them all pass. Fix your soul on God, and " keep your strength for Him."

Dominion

When God created man, He made his body from the dust—nothing could be meaner. He breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul, the image and likeness of God—nothing higher.

He gave him dominion over all things beneath him : not as sovereign, exactly, but vice-gerent. His state was to exercise this dominion over all below him, and to subject himself to what was above him : to rule creatures, and to be subject to God. Man was thus the Lord and Master of the world, of beasts, fishes, birds, and all living creatures, as well as of his own body and its passions. For dominion was given to that part of him which bore the image and likeness of God ; *i.e.* the soul. The soul of man had dominion over all things, and was subject to God.

And not only was it lord and master, but priest also. Through him creatures praised God. Creatures served him, and he served God, and through him they served God. Birds sang, flowers blossomed, all without intelligence. Man their voice ; man sings the *Benedicite* of the dumb creation.

At the fall, man abdicated this dominion. The whole history one of weakness. Eve takes the apple because she has a fancy for the look of it ! Adam, not deceived, with his eyes open, sins to please her ! At once they lose dominion ; they see their misery ; they cease to be masters of creatures, or masters of themselves. The passions rush in upon them and master them. From lords, they become slaves.

But not to remain so. The whole supernatural system was invented as a means of restoring to man his lost dominion. Man is not left to himself. Christ comes at last, to set him free. The history of man, a struggle with weakness. We may say ; " our case is just this. We have lost dominion ; we feel it.

Therefore, under temptation we cannot resist. We wish to do so, but have no power; therefore it is not our fault. God should give us the power."

This is an error. Dominion is lost, but the power of regaining it left. The will is left free and is aided by the grace of God, which is *never* refused. Take extreme case, which is shown in the history of the second sin: Cain and Abel. There is no passion so powerful as envy: tumultuous and blinding; will powerless (as we feel it); a storm and madness. The direct opposite of charity. "Charity envieth not" (1 Cor. xiii. 4). Its degrees —anger, jealousy,[1] envy, hatred, murder—all these in Cain. (Read Gen. iv. 4–7.) You will see that even in the midst of this storm, he *could* have resisted: he was not actually powerless. It rested with his own will to regain dominion.

"The lust thereof (of sin) shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it" (Gen. iv. 7). Over *it*; *i.e.*, over the inclination to evil. What did he do? He took his brother into the field and slew him. But he was not forced; he might have resisted. He might have ruled his mad envy; as it was, it ruled him.

We, then, can regain lost dominion. We can use our will, even after the fall. Listen to Saint Catherine of Siena: "Your will is a fortress, which you can keep or lose. It is given to you, strengthened by the Blood of Christ. It is a weapon, which, if you choose to make over into the hands of the devil, is a knife to slay you. We can always conquer by a will that knows how to resist."

And why do we not resist?

One great cause of weakness is human respect. Human respect puts man in the place of God; the fear of man for fear of God, the love of man for love of God, human motives for divine motives; what will people say, what will people think? for what does God command? Shall I be liked, shall I be admired, shall I be esteemed? instead of the simple question: Is it right?

Human respect, in one shape or other, is the great cause of imperfection and sin. Think of dominion: it implies what is strong, firm, determined, acting on a principle. Think of human respect: weak, vacillating, swayed about by contrary motives. The tyrant of the world, and fitly; all worldliness is made up of it.

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[1] Character of jealousy; bites, blinds, colours, distorts, tortures.

But what have we to do with the world? We have renounced it. Yes: but have we renounced its spirit? Not if we are still governed by human respect, and nothing more common, even in religion. There is no greater obstacle to our gaining dominion over ourselves than this. And how does it act? Even religious often care for what is thought, felt, or said of them.

There are two things in the matter of human respect that have to be corrected; the weakness of those who act from the motive of human respect, and the conduct of those who act so as to bring others under the fear and terror of it.

This latter is chiefly done by want of government of the tongue and too great freedom in the habit of *making remarks*. Remarks are terrible things; they govern weak souls—and most souls are weak. Wherever there is want of restraint in this matter many souls are tyrannised over, many faults committed, and many good works left undone. I once heard it said that to have to make a public general confession would be less hard than to have to bear "remarks"!

Human respect, then, is a positive tyranny; a bar to anything brave, noble, or elevated. But only to be broken through by those who will act steadfastly, strongly, on principle; raising the standard of what is right, true, and according to God, in opposition to what is base and worldly. And this is the precise temper and disposition required for those who would regain dominion over themselves.

THE DOMINANT PASSION, THE GREAT ENEMY TO DOMINION

The words themselves tell us this. The passion that has *dominion* over us: ambition, love of esteem, self-indulgence, sloth, pride, temper, self-will, jealousy—any of these.

The dominant passion is easy to conquer.

God has so ordered things, that what is *necessary* is not very difficult to obtain. Air to breathe, food to eat, all necessaries of life. So also in grace.

Four general means to overcome it.

1. Deep persuasion of certain truths; 2. Certain interior occupations; 3. Particular maxims; 4. Acts that help us to gain the victory.

1. PERSUASION:

(*a*) That life and death depend on it.

(*b*) Not to be extinguished, so as never to be felt; the attempt would cause despair; but to be dominated.

(*c*) A very grave and terrible fact, that in each soul there is a seed, which, if allowed to grow, will lead to eternal ruin. This is the dominant passion.

2. OCCUPATIONS.

If a man has a deadly enemy, he is always on his guard, always thinking how to protect himself against him; always turning over in his mind how to thwart his designs and ruin him. Nothing is so hard to resist as a man who has but one business in life.

This is what we have to do with our dominant passion. Make it our *business* to conquer it; let thought of it find a place in all our prayers and all our resolutions. This is a sort of continual war which *must* be successful.

3. Maxims.

(*a*) After making most generous resolutions we are inevitably certain to fall again from time to time; therefore, resolve, whenever you fall, to rise again, and never to give up the struggle. " I am a man, with good will, with grace: so, if I persevere, I shall be certain in time to win the victory; and, please God, I mean to persevere.

(*b*) *Movements*—even if we don't fall. Despise them.

(*c*) Never assign limits as to the time it will take to overcome. It may take a month, or a year, or your whole life: a matter of indifference.

(*d*) Believe in your victory, even if you are not feeling its results.

4. Acts.

(*a*) Particular examen on it.

(*b*) Always confess the faults into which it draws you. They may be venial; but bring them under the power of the Sacrament.

(*c*) Some special austerity against it.

(*d*) Do yourself violence in other things. Get into the habit of doing yourself violence. Contrary virtues: *e.g.* kindness, if naturally harsh; patience, if naturally hasty. Because we are often very zealous in the practice of virtues we are naturally inclined to, and neglect those opposed to nature. It is comparatively easy for some natures to be austere, and for others to be good-natured and easy, but very difficult for the first to be sweet and affable, and for the others to be severe to themselves.

Finally

No man can recover a lost kingdom without war.

"I came not to send peace, but the sword" (Matt. x. 34).

God's Designs Frustrated

"If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes" (S. Luke xix. 42).

The sadness of these words. How different things *might* have been! How different our Lord's designs were!

It reminds one of those other words, spoken by God, of His rebellious people, Israel: "If my people had heard me. . . . I should soon have humbled their enemies" (Ps. lxxx. 14, 15).

And again: "Oh, that they would be wise, and would understand! How should one pursue after a thousand, and two chase ten thousand" (Deut. xxxii. 30).

Always the same: God longing to help and show mercy; man careless, rebellious, unfaithful.

Israel of old. Jews in Our Lord's time. Christendom also, faithless. If we were faithful, what a change we should see! What a bitter regret to our Lord, to see His designs frustrated!

What the world would be, if *all* kept faithful to Baptism, or used the Sacraments aright, or kept the Commandments. And He meant that it should be so. We have never yet seen the Church as He meant it to be.

More personal to ourselves. God's designs over each one of our souls. Every baptised soul intended to live an upward life of sanctity. It is implied in the Baptismal Service that we are *not to fall*: "Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it unstained." And the same words are spoken to us at the ceremony of our Clothing: "The Lord clothe thee with the garments of salvation, and mayest thou, by his grace, keep them clean and spotless."

If, then, we fell from Baptism, Profession is a *second Baptism*. Here are the designs of God.

How have we corresponded? If Our Lord looked at us—at you, and at me—might He not stand weeping over us as over Jerusalem, saying the same words, as He sees all His designs broken and frustrated? "If thou hadst known; if thou hadst understood." The peculiar sadness in them is that Jerusalem *might* have known, *ought* to have known. She had her day of grace, when Our Lord walked through her streets, taught in her temple: "I was with you daily in the temple" (Mark xiv. 49). And because she did not use that day of grace, the light was hidden from her eyes.

There is a similar passage in the parable of the barren fig-tree. The Master comes for three years, seeking figs, and finding none. At last:—"Cut it down therefore: why cumbereth it the ground?" (S. Luke xiii. 7). A year's respite is given. *If* it bear fruit, well: if not, it is doomed. S. Augustine compares this to religious, and gives a great many reasons why they are like figs, specially from the passage in Jeremias, of good figs being very good, but evil figs very evil (Jer. 24). Also, that the barren tree is to be dug about, its roots stirred by sharp trials. Perhaps even yet it will bear fruit; but if not, no more chance given. Cut it down.

Vocation

Call of Abraham: of Samuel: of David: in the Old Testament.

In the New. The Apostles; S. Matthew; Sons of Zebedee; Nathaniel; S. Paul.

Character of these vocations different, yet alike. Different as to time and circumstance; alike, as separating a soul from its former surroundings; sealing it with the seal of God's choice, and marking it as His own—and that for a purpose. Abraham, David, S. Paul; for great purposes. But all vocations are for a purpose, and all God's purposes are great.

Vocation one of those things which unveil to us the intimacy of God's relations with our souls. You know what is meant by an *intimate* friendship between two persons. It is distinguished from that superficial intercourse we hold with those around us, and which never penetrates beyond the surface, by carrying us straight to the heart and the central consciousness of a friend. We share another's principles; we have an instinctive knowledge of what he feels, and thinks, and suffers. There is a tie between us, which does not exist with others, and the strength of this tie is in the strength of our mutual trust and mutual sympathy.

Now, God is a Person, and vocation betrays to us the amazing fact that he contracts ties of this sort with man; not in an equal degree with all men, though he is indifferent to none of the souls that He has made. But there are some souls that He has elected, and pre-elected. He has had His eye and His heart on them from all eternity. They are *His*; and between Him and them there exists that mysterious attraction, which declares itself in the Providence with which He has surrounded them, the inspirations He lavishes on them, the tenderness with which He has solicited their love, the generosity with which He forgives and obliterates their offences.

It is a wonderful thing to say that between God and these chosen souls there is a special tie of sympathy. We, to sympathise with God; God, to sympathise with us! which is most astounding? Whether is the greater marvel, that we, in our misery, should yet be conscious of a sensitiveness to what touches the honour and interests of God; that we should, in spite of our own shortcomings, yet feel that we possess a key which explains God's dealings with souls ; a capacity for loving what He loves, and hating what He hates—or that God, in His mercy, should sympathise with us, feel for our small trials, appreciate our feeble efforts, care for and set great store by our childish sacrifices, and constantly bend over us and watch us, as a mother bends over the cradle of her infant ?

Yet all this only belongs to His general providence. Between Him and those whom He has called nearer there is more than this. It is impossible to exaggerate the closeness of the intercourse which may exist between God and a soul. If such a soul but tusts a glance towards God, it meets His answering glance. If it offers Him a sacrifice, it is accepted with the quickness of thought. Let it but enter on any course of real devotedness, and for each act whereby it gives itself, its life, its intention, its freedom, its happiness to God, there will be a corresponding act on His part, and one concerning which we are not left in doubt.

Nothing in all revelation is so wonderful as this.

ANGELS, THE PATTERN FOR RELIGIOUS

The religious life is often called " angelic," for many reasons. Angels are the ministers of God, His servants. They are purely spiritual, and therefore a life in which the spirit predominates over the flesh is like their life.

The life of Religious is supported by the Blessed Sacrament. This is called " the Bread of Angels " ; not that angels partake in it sacramentally, but because to them, as to us, God is the strength of their life : they live by Him.

Again :

Angels stand always in the presence of God, to worship Him and to fulfil His Will : theirs is a mixed life.

Our Choral Office is the imitation of their " Sanctus." Our active life is the imitation of their continual warfare with evil.

Then, consider the motto of the great chief, Saint Michael. "Who is as God ?" It implies a comparison between God and the creature : what a comparison ! Consider the beauty, the power, the wisdom of the Creator, and the deformity, the weakness, the emptiness of creatures !

This word, "Who is as God ?" contains the history of our vocation. We have each said it. "Who is there on earth that I desire, in comparison of Thee ?" This is religious vocation : the deliberate preference and election of God, as our portion, and the renunciation, for His sake, of the creature.

This is the Angelic Life.

COMMUNITY LIFE

I. *Its importance.*

1. It is the real former of character.

2. Mutual support of example, following a good current; public opinion on the side of good, instead of, as in the world, human respect, on the side of evil.

3. Occasions for exercising virtues, as patience, self-suppression and self-sacrifice ; *i.e.*, unselfishness.

4. Self-knowledge, assisted by our true relations with each other, free from conventionalities.

5. The prop of regularity.

II. *Its difficulties.*

1. Routine and dulness.
2. Disgusts.
3. A constant tie.
4. The tomb of self-pleasing.

III. *Its temptations.*

1. Jars, or talking scandal.
2. Faults of the tongue.
3. Aversions and preferences.
4. Efforts to escape, (*a*) by making our offices an excuse, (*b*) by seeking active work outside, as a distraction.

IV. *How to protect it.*

1. Supernaturalise it.
2. Regard it as an instrument of penance.
3. Have machinery for pulling yourself up on certain points.
4. Be convinced of its value.

PSALM XXII. APPLIED TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

1. "The Lord ruleth me; I shall want nothing: He hath set me in a place of pasture."

Our Rule is the law by which God governs us; the expression of His Will concerning us; the way He orders or rules every minute of our lives. This is why, in holy religion, we "want nothing," and why it is to us "a place of pasture."

2. "He hath converted my soul."

In old times religious profession was termed a "conversion," because it is the turning away from the world, and the turning of the whole man to God.

3. "He hath led me on the paths of justice; for His own Name's sake."

"The paths of justice," the ways, the habits, the guidance and direction, by which He leads us to be saints. The paths of justice are the paths of sanctity, of the spiritual life, of the holy way of the Cross, the following of Our Lord, the paths of perfection. "His *own* Name;" *i.e.* the Holy Name of JESUS.

4. "Though I should walk through the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me."

In these paths we often meet with darkness, aridity, spiritual trials and temptations, so terrible as to seem to us like the shadow of death, yet, being led and directed by Him, even in the midst of them we fear no evil, because He is "with us," by grace, if not by feeling.

"Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me."

Our comfort, the support of the true religious, is the Cross. Whether we regard it as our anchor of hope, our staff, or even as a *rod*—that is, in its penitential form—whether to support or to correct, still it is our " comfort "—that is, our strength.

3. " Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me."

The table of God, the Christian altar, always prepared, always ready ; " before us " each time we enter the choir, our refuge in affliction.

" Thou hast anointed my head with oil ; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it ! "

Oil, the symbol of grace : the abundance, in religion, of all the means of grace. " The cup that inebriateth, the Blessed Sacrament. How goodly is it indeed ! Its beauty. The Blessed Sacrament has a beauty of its own : think of this at the Elevation or Benediction.

6. " Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days."

All this, a life-long gift. We are His for ever—*usque ad mortem*. Our vows, perpetual ; to last until death, and in some sense beyond it, unto " length of days," that is, Eternity.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

The worship and service of God is made up of many things, *e.g.*—

Self-accusation and Repentance.
Praise and Thanksgiving.
Joy.
Acts of worship to the most Holy Trinity.
Acts of worship to the Incarnate Son.
Acts of charity.
Hearing instruction, and mutual incitement to good works.

Hence the variety in the Divine Office.

Psalms. Good works.

Anthems. Mutual charity, imperfect in this life, perfect in next : therefore, only begun before the psalm, completed afterwards.

Hymns. Joy.

Canticles. Devout rapture.

Versicles. To rouse and make wandering thoughts return to God.

The anthems and psalms begun by one voice, and continued by all, because charity begins in One (Christ), and is continued by all His members, united in Him.

The "Pretiosa."

In it we pray for the right regulation of our thoughts and works during the coming day.

"*Filios eorum*"—our thoughts.

"*Dirige opera*"—our works, plural; *opus*, singular; 1. Because all to be done with *one* intention; and 2. Because the works of the whole community are *one*, by oneness of aim and heart. Then the sense gathered up and repeated by the person presiding, in the collect.

Character of the Saint

From the Common Office of Confessors

(*A fragment.*)

The Saint is "the just man;" that is, just to God, to man, and to himself; giving to each his due. Notice three comparisons: "*Justus palma florebit:*" *Sicut cedrus multiplicabitur:*" "*Germinabit sicut lilium.*" The palm, the cedar, and the lily.

1. Duty to God. The palm, going straight up to heaven; directing its intention and all its acts, immediately to God.

2. Duty to his neighbour. The cedar, multiplying itself, and spreading its branches abroad, like the cedar of Lebanon. Diffusive, expansive charity.

3. Duty to self. The lily, hiding itself in lowliness and humility.

Besides these three images of duty, in its threefold form, take the five Antiphons formerly used at Lauds, as furnishing the picture of a Saint.

1. "*Domine, quinque talenta tradidisti milii.*" Guard of the five senses. Mortified.

2. "*Beatus ille servus, quem, cum venerit Dominus, invenerit vigilantem.*" Watching for the expression of the Will of God; ready to open when He knocks. Fidelity to conscience.

3. "*Fidelis servus, et prudens.*" (Guard of the tongue.) He is the servant of God. Here is the Saint in his active work for others, which he discharges faithfully, as the servant of God, which is his proudest title. Submission to God's dominion.

4. "*Ecce vere Israelita, in quo dolus non est.* Simplicity, truth, guilelessness.

5. "*Serve bone et fidelis, intra in gaudium Domini tui.*" The reward of fidelity. "Enter with joy." Not only the promise of eternal life, but even here below, he enters into the joy of God. Interior peace, union of heart with God.

NOTES FOR A LENT CONFERENCE

The ceremony with which we begin Lent is intended to fill our souls with a true and sincere sense and conviction that we are sinners, and that, as sinners, we must turn back to God. You know that what the Church does is never without a meaning, and if we are wise, we shall try to enter into her meaning and and embrace her teaching. What she used formerly to do, when imposing canonical penances on great sinners, whom she was for the time putting out of communion, she now does to all her children. On all, without exception, she lays the ashes of penance. To all, without exception, she speaks the words which humble them to the dust. And she would have us understand that she desires to convict of sin, not merely open and scandalous breakers of God's law, but every man, whom she calls on at this time to look into his heart, to confess and acknowledge his transgressions as they are in God's sight, and to return and begin again.

Evidently, then, the first thing we need, in order to begin our Lent well, is the sincere and honest acknowledgment of what we truly are in God's sight, and of what we ought to be in our own. If you look at the parable of the prodigal—the model of all penitents—you will see that it was with this he began: "I will arise and will go to my father, and say to him: Father I have sinned" (Luc. xv. 18). Here is our first point. And it must not be in that general sort of way, in which people will sometimes call themselves miserable sinners, while all the time they would be sadly affronted if anyone, whether a Superoir or otherwise, were to hint at so much as an imperfection! We must try and work this point into our hearts, as a real honest conviction, and be prepared to accept all its consequences. If we are in mortal sin, we have no supernatural rights. If we are sinners, we must be punished, and must punish ourselves. Above all, if we are sinners, we must not lose any time in getting rid of our sins, and returning to better ways. The prodigal did not rest content with acknowledgment, but he carried it into practice. He arose and went to his father: with him it was not words only, but deeds. What follows on acknowledgment, then, is penance, and that in its two branches; the punishment of sin, and its amendment. Any penitential acts God may give us strength to perform during this Lent are to be performed—do not let us forget it—as *punishment for sin.*

But to punish our sins, and make no effort to amend them, would be an odious hypocrisy, and would be either no penance at all, or a lop-sided one. To perform exterior work, and take no heed of interior dispositions is not the penance of the Gospel. Proud penance and unloving prayer never sanctified any soul.

If you look at the Magnificat Antiphon for the Saturday after Ash-Wednesday, how suggestive it is! "Much patience, fasting and watching, and charity unfeigned."[1] Fasting and watching: here are exterior works of penance not to be left undone; but they stand between patience and charity, the weightier matters of the law.

So then we have before us, as our idea of Lenten penance:

Acknowledgment of sin.
Punishment of sin.
Amendment of sin.

But even this is not quite all. The prodigal did something more besides this. *He went to his father.* He did not stay in the far country, and turn over a new leaf there. He went back to his father. There was a great deal of humility in this, and a great deal of love. And, which is the best of all possible proofs of love, there was a great deal of confidence. Remember how he had outraged his father, and given him the right to shut his doors against him; he had wasted his goods, and brought disgrace and discredit on his family. But he trusted his father's heart. He knew that the love and pity of that heart were simply without bounds, so he went back to him, quite certain of not being repulsed.

Something of this also must enter into our Lenten observance. We must not be content with confessing, and punishing, or even with amending our sins. We must go to our Father. We must get nearer to God, nearer to the Cross, to the Passion, to the Sacred Heart. And we must trust this Divine Heart infinitely. Even whilst we go down into the very dust of self-accusation and humiliation, we must never, even for a moment, doubt the love, the pity, and the long suffering of our Father's Heart. To do so would be to wound that Heart even more acutely than we have done by our sins. Ask yourselves if you do not feel it to be so; if to have your love doubted is not the keenest of all injuries. Confidence is not only the victorious part of penance, but it is the act which renders so much glory to God, as to make up for much of which we have robbed Him. So the Psalmist says: "What shall I render to the Lord?" (Ps. cxv. 12). That is, *give back*: "I will take the chalice of salvation" (Ps. cxv. 13). That is, I will not stay away from Him in fear, but I will draw near to Him in confidence and love. If we do this, we shall perfectly accomplish our Lenten penance, and cause that "joy in Heaven," which is celebrated over one repentant sinner.

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[1] "*Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis: in his ergo diebus exhibeamus nos sicut Dei ministros in multa patientia, in vigiliis. in jejuniis, in charitate non ficta.*" [Sabbats ante Quadrag., Brev Ord. Praedicatorum.]

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